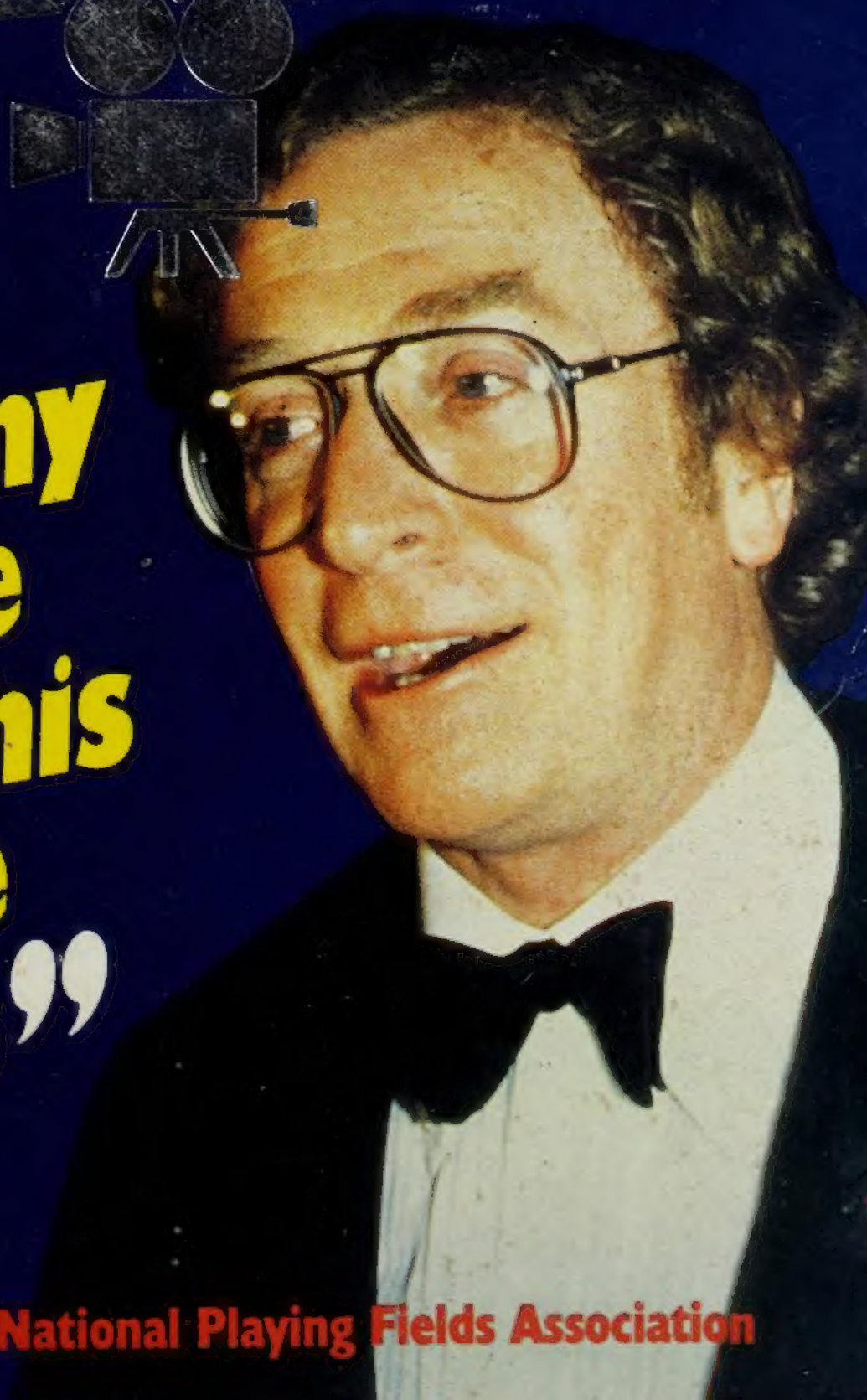
MICHAEL CAINE'S

— MOVING PICTURE SHOW —



"Or Not Many People Know This Is The Movies"

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MICHAEL CAINE'S MOVING PICTURE SHOW OR NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THIS IS THE MOVIES

Michael Caine takes the lid off the film industry with a collection of hilarious and illuminating tales of Hollywood . . . and Pinewood and Shepperton and Ealing, and many other less glamorous locations.

Not many people know, for example, that Edward VIII is the only British monarch to have acted in a film drama. Or that Charlie Chaplin once entered a Charlie Chaplin look-alike contest – and came third. Or that, after a preview of *The Wizard of Oz*, an MGM producer advised: 'I don't like that "Over the Rainbow" song. It slows the picture down.'

Michael Caine also relates some of his own adventures in the movie world, including his experiences with killer bees in filming *The Swarm*! Britain's busiest and most successful Oscar winner presents a rich compendium of entertaining anecdotes, amusing quotations and his own inimitable brand of fascinating facts.

Also by the same author,
and available from Coronet:

NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THAT!
AND NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THIS,
EITHER!

About the author

Michael Caine was born in 1933, the son of a Billingsgate fish porter, and after leaving school worked in a variety of jobs until, as office boy to a film producer, he discovered his ambition – to act. In 1963 he achieved his first triumph in *Zulu* and went on to become an international star in films such as *The Ipcress File*, *Alfie*, *Educating Rita* (for which he won BAFTA's Best Actor award) and *Hannah and Her Sisters*. He now lives in England, with his wife Shakira. He has two daughters, Natasha and Dominique.

Michael Caine's Moving Picture Show

Or Not Many People Know This Is The Movies

Michael Caine

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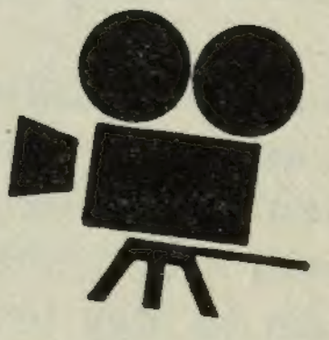
OPENING SHOTS



Since so much of my own work has originated in Hollywood and since the movie industry as we know it really developed there it seems appropriate to take a quick look at its very early days, by way of introduction.

Thinking about the movie industry today it seems incredible to me that not so long ago Hollywood was just a stretch of the beautiful California coastline, inhabited mainly by people who'd retired there. Today its influence has spread worldwide to the point where you don't have to be living in Beverly Hills to stay right in the thick of the movie business.

After living and working in Hollywood for the length of time I did, I'm often asked if I miss it now that I'm back living in England. I can't see friends as regularly as I used to, that's true. But with people able to travel as they are today it's easy enough to stay in touch; in nine weeks filming on the Riviera in the summer of 1988 I managed to see all my friends from California during their visits to Europe. Today 'Hollywood' is everywhere and since coming back to England all the work I've done has come from America. It makes you realise what a very small world we're living in.

The movie business itself has always been a small world. Working on the Riviera during the shooting of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* that summer I was in the milieu in which I spent a lot of time with my friend David Niven, who lived nearby. As it happened I was playing the same part that he had played in the original version and one afternoon, filming at Beaulieu, I found myself sitting in the pavilion, playing the part that David had played, made-up not unlike him with a moustache and my hair smoothed back, and looking across

the water to his house where I had been so many times in the past.

The industry may have come a long way from the early days of the silent movie, but as you'll see in the pages that follow there are some parts to the business that keep cropping up right through its history.

The word 'movies' was not originally used to refer to films but to the people who made and appeared in them. The folk of the small settlement known as Hollywoodland were mostly retired people who'd come west for the sunshine. They strongly disapproved of 'the movies' – the film people with their strange clothes and habits who disrupted their quiet lives.

Interestingly enough, the reason why the movie-makers went west in the first place was to avoid paying a fee to the man who had invented the movie camera, Thomas Edison. In the earliest days of the business, New York was the film capital of America. The major studios there paid a fee to Edison for the use of his invention. Increasingly, smaller companies set up as pirate film-makers and avoided paying this fee. The big companies retaliated by hiring detectives to track down the illegal operators, who promptly packed up and moved 3,000 miles west, where no detective could follow them. Not only was it safer for them to operate out there, but the weather was better for filming. Thus began Hollywood . . .

The first movie studio in Hollywood was called Centaur Pictures.

The first real movie star was Florence Lawrence, originally of Biograph studio fame. At that time movie actors and actresses did not have their names publicised, and she became known to fans simply as 'the Biograph girl'. As her popularity began to sweep the country the Biograph producers decided to use her name and acknowledge her as a star.

In 1912 Will Barker, the pioneer of British films and the founder of Ealing Studio, made the first screen version of *Hamlet*, shooting all twenty-two scenes in a single day at a cost of £180.

Almost as soon as films were being commercially made and distributed, cinema owners began devising stunts to fill their seats. A favourite, used around America in the 1910s, was to advertise the fact that at a certain performance of a particular film, a baby would be given away. The owner of the cinema would then arrange for someone to send a letter of protest to the local newspaper. Almost inevitably a major debate would erupt, with a flood of letters condemning such callousness – to which the cinema owner would reply that the baby's mother didn't object to the arrangement, and the baby itself had said nothing against the plan. With luck, on the appointed day the cinema would be packed out with an indignant crowd who were treated to the sight of the manager giving away a baby pig – or, if he thought he could get away with it, announcing that, because of their concern, he would *not* be giving the 'baby' away.

When she became the first *femme fatale* of the screen, early this century, publicists claimed that Theda Bara's name was an anagram of 'Arab death'. Untrue: it was a shortened version of her real name, Theodosia Barranger.

For a time at the beginning of the century, puritan

Pennsylvania was so touchy on the subject of pregnancy and childbirth that it banned a film scene showing a woman knitting babyclothes.

In 1896 a movie entitled *The Kiss* featured a kiss more than thirty seconds long. Thirty years later, it wouldn't have been allowed.

In the days of silent movies every cinema had a pianist whose job it was to accompany the film and provide music that complemented the mood of the scene. It was a skilled job, and players had to keep a constant watch for scene changes and adapt their music accordingly. Just how problematic it could be is illustrated by a tale told by musical conductor André Previn, who in his youth played the piano at a cinema specialising in these silent classics. Bashing out dance tunes to accompany a film about the flappers of the 1920s one afternoon, he took his eyes from the screen and let his concentration slip for a few minutes. The next thing he knew, the cinema manager had rushed down the aisle and sacked him.

Unobserved by Previn, the first film had ended and the great Biblical epic *Intolerance* had started. While solemn scenes from the Last Supper had been projected overhead, he had accompanied them with an energetic rendition of the Charleston!

There were naughty films doing the rounds in 1898, but it wasn't pornography that inspired the first demands for

censorship in the UK. It was a film about cheese! A film-maker called Charles Urban, who specialised in scientific subjects, filmed a chunk of Stilton under a microscope and revealed that it was teeming with bacterial life – as any decent piece of Stilton should be. The British cheese industry was not impressed. Terrified that once people saw the film they'd give up eating cheese for good, they demanded that the movie be suppressed.

In 1917 a film producer had a terrific idea. Why not make a film with the world's greatest opera star, Enrico Caruso? Surely that was guaranteed to pack people into the cinemas? Caruso was paid $250,000 for his performance, but the movie was not the success predicted – after all, this was the era of *silent* movies . . .

What Price Glory? starring Victor MacLaglen and Edmund Lowe seemed to most people to be a perfectly ordinary and inoffensive yarn, but it ended up becoming one of the most infamous and successful silent films of the 1920s. How? In one scene the two stars have an argument. As they yell silently at one another the subtitle 'I don't want nothin' more to do with you' pops up on the screen. Nothing offensive in that, you might think – but for lipreaders the language was infinitely more colourful. As the cameras rolled, MacLaglen and Lowe had traded real insults and such words as 'bastard' and 'son-of-a-bitch' were patently obvious to those who knew what to look for. Three weeks after the film had been distributed across the country, letters began to flood in from the hard of hearing protesting that it was the most disgusting thing they had ever seen.

Word of its terrible language spread – and soon *What Price Glory?* was raking in huge profits.

In the early days of Hollywood a large number of British performers, writers, producers and directors settled in California. They swiftly formed a tight little community which adhered to the British way of life – cricket, Sunday tea on the lawn and so on. So exclusive were they that during one afternoon gathering a warning cry was sounded at Gladys Cooper's house: 'Darling – there seems to be an American on your lawn.'

When the first horror films were introduced, the film companies paid for nurses and ambulances to be stationed on duty outside the cinemas where the movies were shown. This was partly as a publicity stunt and partly also because they were worried that a member of the audience would, literally, be frightened half to death.

In the days of silent movies, messages were projected onto the screen between the short films. Among the messages available were these:

Ladies, we like your Hats, but Please Remove Them.

Please Read the Titles to Yourself. Loud Reading Annoys Your Neighbours.

You wouldn't Spit on the Floor at Home, so Please don't do it Here.

Ladies and Gentlemen May Safely visit this Theatre as no Offensive Films are ever Shown Here.

Those famous words 'Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain't heard nothing yet,' with which Al Jolson launched the era of sound in *The Jazz Singer*, were not actually intended to be heard. They were accidentally recorded when Jolson shouted to a technician on the set, and it was later decided to keep them in.

While audiences thrilled to the wonders of the early 'talkies', film experts were coming up with reasons why this new development would never catch on. 'Personally, I am convinced that films should be seen and not heard,' said film critic Ernest Betts.

'They are doomed to an early and expensive death,' predicted A. P. Herbert.

Even a movie giant like D. W. Griffith got it wrong when he said: 'It will never be possible to synchronise the voice with the pictures. There will never be speaking pictures.'

And one of the chiefs of Warner Brothers stuck up for the silent movie with the words, 'Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?'

The practice of making 'B' movies – low-budget films which preceded a main feature – started after talking pictures were introduced. There was a huge backlog of silent films which audiences were ignoring in favour of the talkies. To get their silent films shown, distributors paired them with

one of the new films. By the time the silents had all been used, the audience had grown used to having a second film, and so the studios began to make them specially to accompany their big-budget productions.

MORE STARS THAN THERE ARE IN HEAVEN

MGM used to boast that they had more stars than there are in heaven and, because of the way the movie studio used to work, if you weren't under contract to a studio you couldn't be a star, because you couldn't work. That old system was fine for the actors in that it provided them with plenty of work. The problem was that they never earned as much money as they should have done. Henry Fonda once told me, 'I'd have been a rich man if I'd been paid like you lot are now.' Movie actors of his generation were paid a pittance by today's standards and if anyone stepped out of line the studio bosses could come down on them really heavily. They didn't take any prisoners, those old guys.

Considering the restrictions placed on many of the old stars, as well as the technical and physical demands they faced (think about the very strong lighting alone), they gave some amazing performances on screen. I'd have loved to have worked with Spencer Tracy who, to my way of thinking, was the greatest of all film actors. With so many actors you can see the 'machinery' working, but never with him. He was always like a real person on screen. To me Spencer Tracy's acting was effortless, like Fred Astaire's dancing. Watching either of them, you get a funny feeling that you could do that – they both make it look so easy.

It's interesting that the modern movie industry has fewer British stars than in years gone by. Maybe the young British actor today is more of a group actor in big companies like the Royal Shakespeare Company or the National Theatre and group acting doesn't make for stardom. There's also the fact that you can't hide when you're a star and many actors don't want that in their work.

That's why I think it's so important to keep your home and your work quite separate. I never give interviews at

home, I don't allow it to be photographed and you never see layouts in magazines or newspapers. To me home is, and always has been, sacrosanct.

Woody Allen was once approached by an excited fan who could say nothing to him except, 'You're a star!'

'This year I'm a star, maybe,' replied Woody. 'But what'll I be next year? A black hole?'

In the heyday of Hollywood, stars' contracts contained all kinds of clauses limiting their behaviour and future work. Joan Crawford's stipulated the time she should be in bed each night. MGM's contract with Buster Keaton banned him from smiling on screen and thus ruining his reputation as 'Old Stoneface'. Maurice Chevalier's contract insisted that he retain his characteristic French accent. Those actors and actresses working on Cecil B. De Mille's biblical epic *King of Kings* had to sign a contract stating that they would not accept future film work without De Mille's permission for five years after the film was shown. The actor playing Jesus had to agree to shave his armpits. And the actress playing the Virgin Mary also accepted a clause that she would not be involved in a divorce for several years; unfortunately this didn't work, and three months after the film's premiere she and her husband received a decree nisi. Also a failure was Paramount's offer of a $500,000 bonus for Clara Bow if she kept her name out of the scandal columns for the duration of her contract.

The more major stars were able to make stipulations of their own. Some insisted on a guaranteed time for finishing work on set – George Arliss, for example, who liked to finish at 4.30 p.m. each day. Trevor Howard had it written into his contract that he would not be required to work on any day when the England cricket team were playing. The father of a young actress called Evelyn Venables insisted on a clause stating that she would not be kissed on screen. And it's rumoured that Roger Moore's contract stipulates that he is supplied with unlimited numbers of his favourite hand-rolled Cuban cigars for the duration of filming.

Deciding which star's name should head the billing is often almost as time-consuming and difficult as actually making the film itself. Whenever Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn appeared together, it was inevitably his name that came first. A director once asked why, adding, 'After all, it's ladies first.'

'This is a movie, not a lifeboat,' responded Tracy.

Poor Fred Astaire. No one seems to have been very impressed by his first efforts to break into the movies. After one audition the talent scout's notes read, 'Can't act, can't sing, slightly bald. Can dance a little.'

David O. Selznick was more complimentary – but only just. 'I am a little uncertain about the man, but I feel, in spite of his enormous ears and bad chin line, that his charm is so tremendous that it comes through . . .'

And even when Fred had proved himself to be the world's greatest hoofer, some people still had it in for him. According to Graham Greene, 'He is the nearest we are ever likely to get to a human Mickey Mouse . . .'

'A star is when someone says, "Let's leave the dishes in the sink and go see Joan Crawford."'

Clarence Brown

After they had starred together in the mega-successful *The Sound of Music* Christopher Plummer confirmed what many had suspected of Julie Andrews. 'Working with her is like being hit over the head with a Valentine's card,' he

said. Perhaps it's no surprise to learn that while he'd been working on the film he'd called it *The Sound of Mucus*!

Central Casting was the talent agency that dealt with all the would-be stars and extras who flocked to Hollywood without contracts. So many people attempted to join their books that in the 1930s a sign was hung over the door reading:

DON'T TRY TO BECOME AN ACTOR. FOR EVERY ONE WE EMPLOY, WE TURN AWAY THOUSANDS.

Spencer Tracy's advice to would-be film stars: 'Memorise your lines and don't bump into the furniture.'

According to almost everyone who worked with them, the Marx Brothers were as crazy off the screen as they were on it. Irving Thalberg, an MGM producer, could testify to that. He once invited them to meet him in his office. The Marx Brothers arrived on time and waited – and waited, and waited. Eventually they went home without getting the chance to see him. Thalberg apologised and arranged meeting number two. He was on time for this one, but halfway through he was called away. The Marx Brothers had their revenge for being stood up again; they moved the heavy furniture and filing cabinets in front of the door, blocking it, and then climbed out of the window and went home.

At meeting number three Thalberg was called away yet

again. This time when he returned, he found the Marx Brothers sitting naked around an open fire they had made in his fireplace, baking potatoes.

Many of the screen's stars seem to have got their break by accident rather than design. Fatty Arbuckle was working as a plumber and was called to fix comedian Mack Sennett's drains. The moment Sennett saw him he signed him up. Judy Garland was offered her MGM contract by mistake when Sam Goldwyn got her confused with Deanna Durbin after he'd seen them both in a short film. He told his assistant to sign the 'flat one' – referring to Miss Durbin's singing. The assistant misheard it as 'fat one' and signed up plump little Miss Garland. Rock Hudson was a postman; on his rounds he had to deliver mail to a Hollywood agent, who spotted his potential, renamed him after the rock of Gibraltar and the Hudson River, and launched him into a movie career. John Wayne worked in a studio props department and was spotted and groomed for stardom by one of the directors who thought he would make a good cowboy hero. In his spare time Wayne learned to shoot and throw knives, but he drew the line at going to acting lessons where he was expected to recite 'cissy' Shakespeare. George Raft was a petty gangster who was offered a part in a movie as a pay-off. And Shirley Maclaine got her big break in the way it's only supposed to happen in the movies. She was appearing in a stage version of *The Pajama Game* when the female lead hurt her leg and couldn't go on. Miss Maclaine went on in her place and was spotted by film producer Hal Wallis who just happened to be in the audience that night.

Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro appeared as a dark, handsome extra in a number of films.

To cover themselves in case any of their audience died of laughter, American comedians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello took out a $100,000 insurance policy with Lloyd's of London.

Comedians always say their work is much harder than that of a tragic actor – and they dislike the assumption made by so many people that being funny is easy. One Hollywood star who took his humour very seriously was Mack Sennett, founder of the Keystone Kops. During an interview, a cynical observer asked, 'What exactly do you have to have to be a good Keystone Kop?'

'You have to understand comic motion,' said Sennett.

The questioner was unimpressed. 'You mean you have to be good at pulling funny faces?' he asked sarcastically.

'No,' said Sennett, suddenly stepping forward and pushing the wise guy backwards into a nearby swimming pool. When he came bobbing and spluttering to the surface he added, 'Now *that's* comic motion.'

'Wet, she was a star,' said Joe Pasternak of swimming champion-turned-actress, Esther Williams. His comment summed up Miss Williams's problem. Splashing in the water she was, undoubtedly, a star. But on dry land her limited acting skills became obvious. The film studios did their best to keep her in the water, with the result that many

of her movies had a repetitive feel. Miss Williams was the first to acknowledge this:

'All they ever did for me at MGM was change my leading men and the water in my pool,' she once said.

David Selznick on Clark Gable: 'Gable has enemies all right – but they all like him!'

According to one definition, casting is the art of deciding which of two faces the public is least tired of. But for major movie stars the problem tends to be one of typecasting. Spencer Tracy was once asked whether he didn't get tired of playing Spencer Tracy. 'What am I supposed to do, play Bogart?' he replied.

Mickey Rooney had the same problem: 'I was a fourteen year old boy for thirty years.' Bert Lahr had an even worse problem:

'After *The Wizard of Oz* I was typecast as a lion, and there aren't all that many parts for lions.'

Walter Matthau's father was a Catholic priest. He gave up the church to marry Walter's mother.

Of all the stars of the *Carry On . . .* films, Kenneth Williams was the most enduring. One of his favourite stories occurred during the filming of *Carry On Up the Khyber*. He

was in the middle of a scene in which Joan Sims had to declare her passionate love for him, when he farted. Miss Sims stopped everything and demanded to know how on earth she was expected to act with his sound effects going off in the background.

'Rudolph Valentino used to sound off all the time in *his* love scenes,' was Williams's response.

'But they were silent films,' the director pointed out, 'and yours are now on the soundtrack.'

Stardom doesn't guarantee anything. When Spencer Tracy accepted his Oscar for the 1937 film *Captains Courageous*, he found that the trophy was inscribed 'Dick Tracy'.

Rock Hudson's homosexuality, which came as a shock to many of his fans, was no surprise to many people in the film industry. According to business gossip, during the filming of *Darling Lili*, which turned out to be a total flop, Julie Andrews kept publicly reminding him, 'Remember, *I'm* the leading lady.'

The film industry has always loved to give its stars nicknames. Among the most memorable have been:

America's Sweetheart Mary Pickford
The Brazilian Bombshell Carmen Miranda
The Handsomest Man in the World Francis X. Bushman
The Girl with the Million Dollar Legs Betty Grable
The Look Lauren Bacall

The Love Goddess Rita Hayworth
Sexpot of the Century Jane Russell
The Sweater Girl Lana Turner
The Professional Virgin Doris Day
The King of Hollywood Clark Gable
The It Girl Clara Bow

'You can't take 60 million people home to bed with you.'

Michael J. Fox on the problem of satisfying all his fans.

One of the greatest romantic idols of the twenties was John Barrymore, known to his fans as The Great Profile. However, his private life was distinctly less romantic than the roles he played, and tales of drunkenness and debauchery surrounded him. At one Hollywood party he was caught relieving himself in the ladies' toilet. 'Mr Barrymore,' cried his hostess, 'this is for ladies!'

'And so,' he replied, exposing himself, 'is this.'

Although it was in films that he achieved his greatest fame, his heart really lay in the stage classics, particularly Shakespeare. His favourite stage role was Hamlet and he occasionally gave lectures on the subject. 'Tell me, Mr Barrymore,' asked one student, 'In your view, did Ophelia ever sleep with Hamlet?'

After a long pause for thought, Mr Barrymore replied, 'Only in the Chicago company . . .' This love of the stage did not extend to films; he viewed the whole process of making movies with contempt and often couldn't be bothered to learn his lines. When this happened, stage hands had to stand around the set holding up prompt boards so that he could read his lines from them. If the

director or his fellow actors protested, they always got the same response: 'My memory is full of beauty – Hamlet's soliloquies, the Queen Mab speech, King Magnus' monologue from *The Apple Cart*, most of the Sonnets. Do you expect me to clutter up all that with this horse-shit?'

Understandably, some of his co-stars found working with him almost impossible. 'Thank God I don't have to act with you any more!' Katharine Hepburn announced as soon as the filming of *A Bill of Divorcement* was over.

'I didn't know you ever had, darling,' was Barrymore's reply.

You might be forgiven for imagining that the death of a star in the middle of making a film would be a disaster. But when Jean Harlow died before the end of work on *Saratoga*, the producers didn't panic. They brought in Mary Dees, who worked as Harlow's stand-in, and she completed the movie.

'If I come back in another life, I want to be Warren Beatty's fingertips.'

'I'm not afraid to die – I just don't want to be there when it happens.'

Woody Allen

Does Terence McQueen have the same ring to it as Steve McQueen? Probably not. And there's not much doubt that Jane Russell sounds more attractive than Ernestine

Russell, her real name. Other stars who have changed their names include Ruth Davis, who became Bette; Margarita Cansino, who was better known as Rita Hayworth; Diana Dors, who began life as Diana Fluck; Allen Konigsberg, now known as Woody Allen; Julius Marx, transformed into Groucho; plain old Archibald Leach couldn't hold a candle to debonair Cary Grant; and Frances Gumm, who after being billed at a theatre as Frances Glumm decided to become Judy Garland.

Danny Kaye was a qualified commercial airline pilot.

When it comes to doing a love scene, a major worry for most actors and actresses is the freshness of their breath. But Lana Turner had that figured out. She chewed gum between takes, and when the cameras rolled she tucked it against her teeth and prepared to pucker up. But when she and Clark Gable were filming *Homecoming* they discovered a new kind of passion killer. Gable kissed her firmly and drew back – taking with him a long string of gum. While he solemnly picked it out of his false teeth, Miss Turner vowed to use mouthwash in future.

Zero Mostel was actually christened Samuel Mostel. He got his nickname because of his low marks at school.

After the success of *The Sheik*, starring Rudolph Valentino, sales of Vaseline rose as men tried to emulate his greased-down hair. They also bought 'Sheik' condoms by the million. Curiously enough, despite the macho sexuality of his films, Valentino himself was probably bisexual. His first wife was a lesbian who locked him out once and for all on their wedding night. His second, Natacha Rambova, was so bossy and domineering that she threatened his career.

When he died of a perforated ulcer in 1926, New York was the scene of unprecedented public grief. Over 100,000 people filed past Valentino's coffin after his death; it took three days for them to pass. Among those who sent flowers were Benito Mussolini, who had been a great fan, and Pola Negri, whose wreath of 4,000 blood red roses measured eleven feet by six.

After Valentino's death the movie studios were desperate to find a Latin lover to replace him. They flew his brother in from Italy, renamed him Alberto Valentino and arranged for a plastic surgeon to make his large nose more attractive. He actually appeared in a couple of films but they were flops and the talent scouts had to look elsewhere for Rudi's replacement.

In the war movie *A Bridge Too Far* Dirk Bogarde played Lt General Frederick Browning. In real life Bogarde had participated in the battle for Arnhem Bridge more than 30 years before – as a captain serving under Browning.

A lot of effort went into making Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers' apparently effortless dance routines, but no one could have anticipated the problem they went through

trying to film the 'Cheek to Cheek' number in *Top Hat*. Their first attempt to film it was a disaster. Ginger made her appearance in a dress covered in red feathers. As the dance started slowly, the occasional feather fluttered to the floor. Then they began to pick up pace and Fred began to twirl his partner round – and suddenly, as if a chicken was being plucked, there were feathers flying everywhere. According to David Niven, who witnessed the scene, by the end of the dance Ginger looked ready for the spit . . .

Katharine Hepburn once explained the Astaire–Rogers magic in this way: 'He gives her class and she gives him sex.'

The award for the longest Hollywood marriage must go to James Cagney and his wife Frances, who were married for 63 years until Cagney's death in 1986 brought an end to their partnership.

Late developer George Burns was eighty years old before he became a big movie star with the success of *The Sunshine Boys*, for which he won an Oscar. He's one of the few actors to have played God, a part which he has taken three times now in *Oh God*, *Oh God Book Two* and *Oh God Book Three*. His best jokes are, understandably, about his age:

'Retire at 65? That's ridiculous! When I was 65 I still had pimples.' And, referring to his original career as a stand-up comedian, he once said, 'People think that all I do is stand up and tell a few jokes. The jokes are easy. It's the standing up that's hard.'

For his seventy-fifth birthday, Bob Hope received a birthday card with 100,000 signatures from admiring members of the public.

Leslie Howard, one of the stars of *Gone With the Wind*, died on 1 June 1943 after being shot down by German fighters during a flight from Lisbon to London. It had been widely rumoured that Winston Churchill was going to be on board the plane; he in fact took another, more secret flight. Many people believe that Leslie Howard acted as Churchill's decoy.

Charlie Chaplin's film *The Great Dictator*, a satire on the Nazis, was banned in Germany. But one print of the copy was supplied by special request so that Hitler could view it – not just once, but twice.

A journalist who was writing a story about Cary Grant and wasn't sure of his exact age once wired his agent with the message, 'How old Cary Grant?' Back came the reply, 'Old Cary Grant fine. How you?'

Grant had the reputation for being mean – which was understandable in view of the number of ex-wives he had to support. In an interview he told the story of how he and Clark Gable would redistribute Christmas gifts. 'I used to telephone Clark Gable each Christmas and say, "Did you get any monogrammed stuff you don't want?" If he said yes, I'd hurry round and we'd exchange initialled presents.'

Groucho Marx was travelling in a lift in Montreal when a priest came up, shook his hand and said, 'I'd like to thank you for all the joy you've given the world.'

'And I'd like to thank you, Father,' snapped Groucho, 'for all the joy you've taken out of it.'

Buster Crabbe, who thrilled Saturday morning audiences with his adventures as Flash Gordon, became a stock-broker when his film career faded. Veronica Lake was less fortunate. Once wooed by Onassis and Howard Hughes, she ended up working as a barmaid. And British actor James Fox, who not long ago appeared in *A Passage to India*, gave up his acting career for several years to become an evangelist.

Mae West, Robert Mitchum and Sophia Loren have all served gaol sentences.

What do Beau Bridges, Jon Voight, Michael Sarrazin, Michael York and Michael Douglas have in common? They all turned down the lead role in *Love Story*. When a relatively unknown actor called Ryan O'Neal was offered the part he grabbed it and immediately shot to fame.

H. B. Warner played the part of Jesus in Cecil B. De Mille's epic *King of Kings*. Unfortunately, while dressed for his

role he had been photographed with a cigarette in his mouth as he read the sports page of the newspaper. As a result it was decided that he should behave with the kind of decorum befitting the character he was playing. Thereafter, on set he had to eat all his meals in a room away from the other actors, he had to wear a hood to hide his face and he was forbidden to swear or do anything lewd. During one day's filming De Mille constantly shouted at him and abused him for his bad acting. 'Do you realise who you are speaking to?' asked the long-suffering actor.

What did Charles Bogle, Primrose Magoo, Ampico J. Steinway, Mahatma Kane Jeeves and Otis Criblecoblis have in common? They were all pseudonyms used by W. C. Fields on his screenplays and even for opening bank accounts, something which he used to do with such frequency that he was often unable to remember the name he had invented.

Bela Lugosi was buried wearing the Dracula cape that he had worn in so many films.

The Marx Brothers deserve a book of anecdotes all to themselves. Here are just a couple of the stories told about them.

After a private screening of *Samson and Delilah* starring the well-built Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr, Groucho Marx was asked what he thought of it. 'I have one major criticism,' he revealed. 'You can't expect the public to get

excited about a film where the leading man's bust is bigger than the leading lady's.'

Whenever Groucho met Sam Goldwyn, Goldwyn always greeted him with the words, 'How's Harpo?' This increasingly annoyed Groucho, who one day pounced after Goldwyn had asked his usual question and said, 'Listen, Sam, every time we meet you always ask "How's Harpo?" You never ask me anything else – and I'm getting sick and tired of it. Why don't you ever ask how *I* am?'

Goldwyn shrugged. 'How are you?'

'I'm fine.'

'And how's Harpo?'

After co-starring in *Young Man with a Horn*, Doris Day said of Kirk Douglas: 'Kirk never makes much of an effort toward anyone else. He's pretty much wrapped up in himself.'

Douglas felt the same way about her. 'Doris is just about the remotest person I know.'

One of the big hits of the 1960s was *Around the World in Eighty Days*, an epic movie that featured dozens of famous stars in brief cameo roles. Instead of a fee, many of them received a car for their services. Noel Coward and Ronald Colman were both recipients.

'A Cadillac just for one day's work?' marvelled a journalist to Colman.

'Not at all, madam – for a lifetime's experience,' was his response.

In 1942 Jack Benny's father went to the cinema to see his son's first film, *To Be Or Not To Be*. In the film Jack played a man helping refugees to escape from Hitler's Germany, and part of the plot involved him dressing up as a Nazi. Mr Benny Senior couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his boy dressed in German military uniform and, being a staunch anti-Nazi himself, stormed out of the cinema in a terrible rage. It was some time before he could be persuaded to speak to Jack on the telephone, at which point the whole misunderstanding was sorted out. After that he went to see the film many times and loved every minute of it.

Noel Coward was in Hollywood when he heard that a very dim actor, an acquaintance of his, had committed suicide.

'How did he kill himself?' Coward asked.

'Shot his brains out,' came the reply.

'He must have been a marvellous shot,' was Coward's response.

Dustin Hoffman's mother was a great movie fan and christened him Dustin after her favourite silent star, Dustin Farnum.

Every star needs fans, but sometimes fans demand an awful lot of their idols. Take Mickey Rooney, who was one day approached by a smiling man who asked if he remembered him. Rooney, embarrassed, had to admit that unfortunately he didn't. He asked where it was they had previously met.

'I saw you in *Love Finds Andy Hardy*,' said the fan – and walked off in a huff before Rooney could think of a reply.

Norma Talmadge, the first star to have her footprints in cement outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre, was less patient with fans – particularly after her retirement. Approached by one young woman clutching an autograph book she grumbled, 'Go away, dear, I don't need you any more.'

A more modern star, Robert Redford, gets out of marathon signing sessions by explaining politely to crowds who besiege him for autographs, 'I can't start what I can't finish.'

One of the most memorable moments of Ronald Reagan's film career came in *King's Row* when he woke up in bed and found that one of his legs had been amputated. 'Where's the rest of me?' he asked. That line stuck with him, and he later used it as the title of his autobiography.

During the promotional stunts for his film *Robin Hood*, Douglas Fairbanks posed with his bow and arrow on a rooftop in New York. For the benefit of the cameras he drew back an arrow – and by mistake shot it off. It came to rest in the backside of a tailor who was working in the building opposite. The victim ran into the street yelling about Red Indians and later sued Fairbanks for $5,000.

Over the years, Roger Moore's acting has come in for plenty of criticism – though it has never seemed to hold him

back. He himself revealed the extent of his technique: 'Left eyebrow raised. Right eyebrow raised.'

Gene Autry made a name for himself as the non-violent singing cowboy in a string of low-budget westerns. His fans were mainly young boys and men, and his influence on them was acknowledged by the publication of Gene Autry's 'Ten Commandments of the Cowboy.' These were:

1 A cowboy never takes unfair advantage of an enemy

2 A cowboy never betrays a trust

3 A cowboy always tells the truth

4 A cowboy is kind to small children, old folks and animals

5 A cowboy is free from racial and religious prejudice

6 A cowboy is helpful and whenever anyone is in trouble he lends a hand

7 A cowboy is a good worker

8 A cowboy is clean about his person and in thought, word and deed

9 A cowboy respects womanhood, his parents and the law

10 A cowboy is a patriot

Autry may well be the only movie cowboy to have a town named after him. In tribute to its native son, Berwyn, Oklahoma, has been re-christened Gene Autry, Oklahoma!

The first James Bond film, *Dr No*, earned Sean Connery only £15,000. Nine years later he was offered £1,000,000 for

Diamonds Are Forever. Although James Bond established Connery as Britain's leading star, he wasn't very grateful: 'I'd like to kill James Bond,' he once said.

27 May is a great day for horror movie fans, because it's the birthday of Vincent Price, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee.

Walt Disney was once asked by an interviewer what it felt like to be a star.

'It feels fine,' he replied, 'when it helps me to get a good seat for a football game. But it never helped me to make a good film or a good shot in a polo game, or command the obedience of my daughter. It doesn't even seem to keep the fleas off our dogs – and if being a celebrity won't give one an advantage over a couple of fleas, then I guess there can't be much in being a celebrity after all.'

Bing Crosby's film career spanned more than thirty years and included such memorable movies as *White Christmas* and *High Society*, yet he once modestly observed: 'Honestly, I think I've stretched a talent which is so thin it's almost transparent over a quite unbelievable number of years.'

Hollywood, and the film industry in general, has always

been pretty tolerant of homosexuality, but it's really only in the last few years that people have acknowledged their sexual preferences openly. In 1962, for example, it was a much more tricky subject. In that year Rock Hudson, who was known by the movie community to be gay, held a press conference at which a rather green young reporter was allotted a few minutes to ask questions.

'I have a personal question,' she started. 'I hope it's not too embarrassing.' There was a strained silence. All the other journalists had been too polite to raise such a difficult issue. They listened with bated breath – and so did Mr Hudson.

'The rumour's been around for years,' she went on, 'though of course, no one really knows whether it's true or not. That's why I have to ask you.'

Mr Hudson's steady gaze had gone somewhat glassy. 'Is it true,' she finished, 'that you've had your teeth capped?'

Great mistakes department. Reviewing the contract of Charles Boyer, who was later to become a great movie heart-throb, Irving Thalberg said, 'We've got a French actor here on a six-month option, but I'm letting him go because nobody can understand the guy's English.'

Woody Allen declined to go along to the Academy Awards ceremony to collect his Oscar for *Annie Hall*. The reason? He spends every Monday evening playing his clarinet with a New York jazz band, and he didn't see any reason to change his usual habits.

Mickey Mouse was originally known as Mortimer.

When an interviewer asked Mel Brooks what he thought about critics, Brooks responded, 'They're very noisy at night. You can't sleep in the country because of them.'

'I said critics, not crickets,' corrected the interviewer.

'Critics!' cried Brooks. 'What good are they? They can't make music with their hind legs.'

Robert Redford's highly successful career is due in no short measure to Warren Beatty's decision to turn down the leading roles in *The Sting*, *The Way We Were* and *The Great Gatsby*.

Many stars started their working life in pretty run-of-the-mill jobs. Here are just a few examples of the kind of work they did before fame took a hand.

Harrison Ford: carpenter. Humphrey Bogart: US Marine. Charles Bronson: coalminer. Errol Flynn: policeman in New Guinea. Ronald Reagan: radio sports announcer. Burt Reynolds: American footballer. Clark Gable: telephone repair man. Glenda Jackson: shop assistant on the make-up counter at Boots. Raquel Welch: waitress.

Remember Dooley Wilson? He played the pianist, Sam, in

Humphrey Bogart's nightclub in *Casablanca*, and he sang 'As Time Goes By'. When the film became a huge success he was booked to appear on the nightclub circuit. But on his very first night he knew he was going to have problems. The nightclub manager walked in as he was setting up, took one look at the stage and asked, 'Where's the piano?' Dooley Wilson had to explain that he was just a singer – he couldn't play the piano. The piano music in *Casablanca* had been recorded by someone else.

Making *Some Like It Hot* was torture for Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon. Dressed in frocks and high heels, they had to wait hours for Marilyn Monroe to arrive on set and film scenes with them. And when she did come she sometimes had trouble remembering the words. For one scene in which her only line was 'Where's the Bourbon?' she needed 40 takes. And for another, in which Tony Curtis had to chew the meat from a chicken bone, she took 42. Apparently Curtis couldn't look at a chicken for months afterwards.

The current Royal Family are no strangers to film cameras, but the only member of the British Royal Family to have acted in a feature film was Edward VIII. As Prince of Wales he appeared in three propaganda films about the First World War. In the first two, filmed in 1919, he played himself.

According to Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant was a great

practical joker on set. In *His Girl Friday* they had a scene together in which she sat at her desk typing; he stood behind her attempting to interfere with her paperwork. The scene went according to plan, with Miss Russell concentrating on her typing and trying to ignore her co-star as he fussed. With her eyes focused on the typewriter, she didn't get the chance to take a good look at him. Then suddenly there was a shriek of laughter from the film crew. Cary Grant had moved out from behind the desk to reveal the fact that he wasn't wearing any trousers.

David Niven and Bette Davis were originally scheduled to play the leading roles in *The African Queen*. Instead, Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn took over and the film became a classic.

Between them, Boris Karloff and Christopher Lee have just about sewn up the horror movie industry. Both have played Dr Frankenstein's monster, Fu Manchu and a mummy.

Not many people know that there was a sixth Marx Brother. Groucho, Chico, Harpo, Gummo and Zeppo were the original brothers, though Gummo and Zeppo left the group fairly early on. There was also Frenchie Marx, who appeared in just one film, *Monkey Business*, in 1931.

Bette Davis and Errol Flynn were not the best of friends. Their breakdown in understanding is reported to have occurred fairly early in Flynn's career when they were making *Elizabeth and Essex* together. Miss Davis starred as Elizabeth I and Flynn was the Earl of Essex, one of her favourites at Court and, depending on which version of history you prefer, her lover. In one scene in which Essex had offended his sovereign, Miss Davis had to slap Flynn round the face. During the rehearsal she drew back her hand and hit him so hard that he was almost knocked over. Naturally he felt aggrieved – actors normally pull their punches so that they don't hurt one another – and he went to her dressing room to talk about it.

'It's too bad if you can't take a little slap,' was the only explanation Miss Davis would give. 'I can't do it any other way.'

Flynn was nervous when it came to the actual filming and braced herself for another wallop. But this time she delivered a perfect dummy slap that stopped just millimetres from his face. This confused him even more.

In a later scene, Essex had to give his queen a friendly pat on the back, so Flynn planned his revenge. When the cue for the slap came, he gave her a resounding thwack. She turned furiously on him, but he just smiled apologetically and said, 'I'm sorry, but it's the only way I can do it.' From that day on, Miss Davis refused to speak to him except in front of the cameras.

In their 1953 movie *Abbott and Costello Go To Mars* the pair actually end up on Venus.

Sometimes those classic moments in a film happen quite by

accident. Appearing as Benjamin Disraeli in *The Mudlark*, Alec Guinness was required to deliver a long speech. While it was being filmed, he inserted a long pause half way through. The pause hadn't been there at rehearsal, but the director was delighted – it was wonderfully dramatic and gave the scene an unexpected tension. When it was over he congratulated Guinness and asked when he'd had that stroke of inspiration for the pause.

Guinness admitted, shamefaced, 'I didn't plan it. In the middle of the speech I forgot my lines.'

Ronald Reagan's much discussed deafness was caused when an actor fired a gun just a few inches from his ear while they were working together on set.

The story of how Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall met and fell in love while working together on *To Have and Have Not* is one of the great Hollywood legends. It was the last thing Miss Bacall could have expected. After all, as she herself revealed, when producer Howard Hawks told her that he intended to put her in a film opposite Cary Grant or Humphrey Bogart her reaction was, 'Cary Grant – terrific. Humphrey Bogart – yuck.'

In memory of their meeting, when Bogie died she placed a small gold whistle in the urn that contained his ashes. On it was engraved, 'If you want anything, just whistle,' her most famous line from that first movie together.

Roger Moore, Joan Collins, Donald Sinden and Virginia

McKenna were all graduates of the Rank 'charm school', which was set up to train future film stars in everything from voice production and deportment to fencing.

Believe it or not, Noel Coward was originally intended to play the part of the King of Siam in the musical *The King and I*. He decided it wasn't his cup of tea and the part went to the then unknown Yul Brynner.

With the coming of sound, Charlie Chaplin faced a particularly difficult problem. His reputation was based almost entirely on his Little Tramp character, and part of the magic of the Little Tramp was that he didn't talk. Chaplin knew that by giving him a voice he'd break the spell, and so he fought against the coming of sound. In one interview to a film magazine he protested:

'Talkies are ruining the oldest art in the world – the art of pantomime. They are ruining the great beauty of silence.'

Others, however, had a different explanation. Al Jolson, soon to become the talking star of *The Jazz Singer* and usher in the new era, commented knowingly:

'Charlie goes on record as loathing talkies . . . What he's really got is a gentleman complex. He's afraid he talks too nice to fit in with the characterisation he has built up on the screen.'

Dustin Hoffman received $17,000 for his role in *The Graduate*, the film that made him a star. When he'd finished

work on it, he went on the dole. The movie earned more than $50 million worldwide.

During the heyday of Hollywood, stars were expected to give presents to everyone they worked with. David Niven tells the story of how, one Christmas, he bought Norma Shearer and her husband Irving Thalberg, who had been very kind to him, six initialled handkerchiefs. They gave him a Studebaker car.

Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy enjoyed a long-term relationship, yet their first meeting was anything but promising. 'I'm afraid I'm a little tall for you, Mr Tracy,' said Miss Hepburn.

'Don't worry, I'll soon cut you down to size,' was the instant reply.

Although he was publicised as an overnight success, Clark Gable went to California three times in his endeavour to break into the movies. After his second attempt he said, 'I don't want to have anything more to do with pictures. The stage is what I want. With luck I can make good on Broadway some day. But why waste my time and MGM's money? I've tried movie work often enough to become convinced I have nothing Hollywood wants.' Fortunately he returned three years later . . .

The two stars of *Marathon Man*, Dustin Hoffman and Laurence Olivier, approached their roles in very different ways. One day Hoffman, who is a Method actor, turned up on set looking exhausted. When Olivier asked what was going on, he explained that he'd stayed up all night so that he was in the right frame of mind to do the scene that was being filmed that day – in which his character hadn't had any sleep. Olivier wasn't much impressed: 'My dear boy,' he said, 'if you'd learn how to act you wouldn't *have* to stay up all night.'

Hoffman is well known for the perfectionism that he brings to his films – a perfectionism that sometimes leads to long wrangles with his fellow actors. Teri Garr, who appeared with him in *Tootsie*, put it this way: 'If you argue with him on something, he wants his point and he wants his way. Finally, if you say, "All right, we'll do it your way," he'll say, "No – I don't want to do it my way until you *like* doing it my way." It's not enough to give in to him, you have to like what he wants, too!'

For *Tootsie*, in which he plays an actor who, unable to get male roles, takes a female role, Hoffman spent long hours perfecting his hair and make-up and the way he talked and walked. He was even brave enough to take his new creation out onto the streets of New York. On one occasion, dressed as 'Tootsie', he went to the Russian Tea Rooms where he bumped into Jon Voight, an old colleague. They talked for twenty minutes before Hoffman revealed who he was.

Warren Beatty, Robert Redford, Steve McQueen, Paul Newman and James Caan all turned down the role of Superman before Christopher Reeve was offered it.

Leading Ladies

In the movie industry there are two types of actors: those who bring something to the movie and the rest of the cast, and the other ones from whom you get a performance over everyone else's dead bodies; the rest of you sit round and wait until the moment is right for the great man or lady to perform. I've been lucky that I've never had to work with prima donnas like this, though it seems to me that in Hollywood today the prima donnas are all gentlemen rather than ladies.

I'd be very pleased to work again with all my leading ladies. Actresses of the calibre of Shirley Maclaine, Jane Fonda and the rest bring a special quality to their film work. They also bring dedication and a willingness to work hard.

It almost goes without saying that the really great stars like Bette Davis, Katharine Hepburn, Barbra Streisand and Meryl Streep are also women of tremendous talent and intelligence and that makes them brilliant actresses.

The old image put out by the studios of their stars as mere glamour girls decked out in jewels and furs never really held water. I imagine even Gloria Swanson used to go round in an old dressing-gown when Adolf Zukor had his back turned.

Star quality isn't easy to define, but I remember telling Elizabeth Taylor when we were making *Zee and Co*, 'I know you're a star and I know you're a professional – and I can prove it.'

'How?' she asked.

'Because you have on your contract that you don't have to be on set until ten o'clock in the morning,' I told her, 'and you're never late!'

My wife, Shakira, had an unexpected taste of movie work when the director, John Huston, suddenly announced

that he wanted her to play the female lead in *The Man Who Would Be King*. This put her in a complete daze, though she didn't actually work with me a lot: she was on set with Sean Connery most of the time. John just told me to stay out of the way and not to try telling Shakira how to act. He said he'd take care of that. He did too, and got a wonderful performance out of her. But she didn't want to go through it again after seeing what hard graft film work is. Getting up at six-thirty was bad enough, but the women had to be up at five-thirty because of their hair and make-up. We were on location in Morocco for twelve weeks shooting that film and it was very, very hot.

Shakira decided that one movie actor in the family is enough.

Barbra Streisand's energy and business acumen is much admired in Hollywood, but working with her is acknowledged to be very difficult. One co-star, asked whether success had spoiled her, commented, 'No, not at all. Barbra's the same arrogant, cold-blooded, egotistical witch she always was.'

The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Mae West could fill a book. Her clever way with words allowed her to say things that no one else would have dared, and in fact brought about her own downfall. Her ribald sense of humour so outraged some movie-goers that they founded the Legion of Decency, which eventually clamped down on her overt sexual references. And without sex, Mae West's audiences deserted her.

Here are just a few of her most famous sayings:

Give a man a free hand and he'll try to run it all over you.

It's better to be looked over than overlooked.

To err is human – but it feels divine.

It's not the men in my life, it's the life in my men that counts.

When I'm good I'm very good, but when I'm bad I'm better.

When a girl goes bad, men go right after her.

Whenever I'm caught between two evils, I take the one I've never tried before.

It isn't what I do but how I do it. It isn't what I say but how I say it. And how I look when I do it and say it.

You gotta get up early in the morning to catch a fox and stay up late at night to get a mink.

I was Snow White – but I drifted.

Late in her life a fan gushed, 'Oh, Miss West, I've heard so much about you!' To which she replied:

'Yeah, but you can't prove a thing.'

And when the US Air Force decided to nickname their inflatable life-jackets 'Mae Wests' in tribute to her figure, the phrase fell into common usage. Writing to thank them, Miss West said, 'I've been in *Who's Who*, and I know what's what, but it's the first time I ever made the dictionary.'

According to many of the actors she worked with, Greta Garbo could be a cool and remote co-star. 'Making a film with Garbo does not constitute an introduction,' said Robert Montgomery. When Groucho Marx found himself fixed by her cold stare he simply said, 'Excuse me, Ma'am, I thought you were a guy I knew in Philadelphia.'

Bette Davis on a young actress who had used the casting couch to get to the top: 'I see – she must be the original good time that was had by all.'

Like so many Hollywood stars, Carmen Miranda was a cocaine user. But she had a novel hiding place to keep her supplies – in the soles of her three-inch platform shoes.

There were problems on set during the making of Marlene

Dietrich's film *The Blue Angel*. Each time she sang that wonderful song 'Falling In Love Again' she mispronounced the line 'Men cluster to me, like moths to a flame.' Time and time again the word 'moth' came out as 'moss', until after 235 takes the director's desperation led him to think of some way of disguising her pronunciation. So when you next get the chance to see the movie, watch out for the song and the moment in it when someone shouts loudly, 'Bring me a beer!' Because *that's* the moment that Miss Dietrich sings 'moss' instead of 'moths'.

In the 1982 film *The Year of Living Dangerously* the part of the male cameraman Billy Kwan was played by actress Linda Hunt, who is 4ft 9ins tall. She won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for the role and gained the distinction of being the shortest adult actress to do so.

How wrong can anyone be? This is a quote from *The Great Garbo*, written by Claire Boothe Luce in 1932:

'Greta Garbo will be forgotten in ten years, and as an actress her memory will be dead when Helen Hayes's, Lynne Fontanne's and Katharine Cornell's are beginning to grow greener.'

The pavement outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre is one of the places every visitor to Hollywood goes to see, for it's there that the stars of several generations have left the imprints of their hands – and sometimes their feet – in wet

cement. Legend has it that the tradition started by accident when Norma Talmadge accidentally stepped into some wet concrete that had just been laid outside the cinema in May 1927. Little did she know that she had started a Hollywood tradition.

When Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell were invited to leave their marks, Miss Monroe suggested that Miss Russell should leave an impression of her famous bosom, and she would sit in the cement and leave an imprint of her famous wiggle. More recently still, busty star Dolly Parton was invited to leave her impression. 'Why don't I use my most outstanding features instead of my feet to make an imprint in the cement?' she asked. 'I'm afraid a little kid might fall in and get hurt.'

Lauren Bacall was born Betty Joan Perske. She adopted her mother's maiden name, Bacal (with only one l) – which means 'wine glass' in Romanian.

'Acting is like sex. You should do it and not talk about it.'

Joanne Woodward.

When she was first shown the script of *The African Queen* Katharine Hepburn was excited about the prospect of filming it, but she insisted that it was done properly – in Africa. She might not have been so forceful if she'd known what lay in store. For one scene she had to wade into a river, pushing the boat out of the weeds in which it had become stuck. 'What about all the crocodiles?' she asked, pointing to the crocs lazing on the banks.

The director promised that he'd have some bullets fired into the water before the scene to scare the crocodiles off.

'But what about the deaf ones?' asked a nervous Miss Hepburn.

Marilyn Monroe posed as *Playboy*'s first centrefold in December 1953.

Referring, perhaps, to the fact that she participated in Hollywood's first nude screen test for her role in *Four for Texas*, John Simon said of Ursula Andress, 'The name has always seemed a spoonerism to me.'

Bette Davis's start in Hollywood was not a promising one. She arrived by train, and an official greeter was sent to meet her. He returned alone, with the excuse, 'No one who looked faintly like an actress got off the train.' In a way he was right. She didn't have the glamour or good looks associated with movie stars – and she didn't even have much sex appeal according to one observer, who said, 'I can't imagine any guy giving her a tumble.'

After directing her with two other starlets in a film called *Three on a Match*, Mervyn LeRoy made this prediction: 'I think Joan Blondell will be a big star, Ann Dvorak has definite possibilities, but I don't think Bette Davis will make it.'

What he had underestimated was her determination to get to the top. She was a thorough professional who controlled everything that happened around her. One day,

during a newspaper strike, rumours began to circulate New York that she had died. Her lawyer telephoned her to tell her about them, but she was not bothered. 'With the newspaper strike on I wouldn't consider it,' she told him.

When Louise Fletcher won the Oscar for Best Actress for her performance in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, she thanked her parents in sign language because both were deaf.

'Sex is part of nature, and I go along with nature.'

Marilyn Monroe

Greer Garson was one of the most popular stars of the 1940s. She gave up making films for several years during the 1950s, but was persuaded back in 1960. One of the stipulations in her contract was that the lighting cameraman should be the man who had lit and photographed her so flatteringly during the high point of her career. Work began on the movie, but Miss Garson was disappointed with the first rushes she saw.

'You're not photographing me as well as you used to,' she complained.

'Well,' he said tactfully, 'I'm ten years older . . .'

In 1942, the year in which Katharine Hepburn starred in the

film *Woman of the Year* in which she played a woman who was awarded that title, she herself became *McCall* magazine's first Woman of the Year.

'It's the good girls who keep the diaries. The bad girls never have time.'

Tallulah Bankhead

Dynasty star Joan Collins has often been accused of having plastic surgery, but when she was a young Rank starlet in the 1950s she actually refused it. She was near to landing the role of Juliet in a film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, but the director took exception to her nose. 'You will have the nose job . . .' he told her. 'Julietta she hassa the Roman nose – you have the nose it goes up – is not aristocratic.' Miss Collins declined to have it remodelled, and fortunately her unaristocratic nose does not seem to have done her career any harm.

Fay Wray was promised, 'You will have the tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood.' She did – King Kong . . .

Fred Astaire on his favourite dancing partner. 'When you've danced with Cyd Charisse you stay danced with.'

Poor Marion Davies might have been an excellent comic actress if she had been allowed to develop her talents, but her billionaire boyfriend William Randolph Hearst preferred her to star in cloying melodramatic roles. Which could explain why one review simply said of her: 'Miss Davies has two expressions – joy and indigestion.'

When fans recognise film stars they more often than not have something complimentary to say to them, but Dorothy Lamour had an embarrassing experience when she was out dining one evening. A young man came up to her table. 'Miss Lamour, I've seen four of your pictures,' he started.

'Thank you!' said Miss Lamour.

'And they were awful,' said the man. 'I'd like the dollar and sixty cents I spent on them back.'

Miss Lamour took two dollars from her handbag and, with admirable coolness gave them to him with the words, 'And I'd like the forty cents change, please.'

Glamorous Joan Crawford, famous for her shoulder pads and tough looks, liked nothing more than to knit on set – during rehearsals, breaks in filming and even through lunch.

Of all Hollywood's divorce scandals, and there have been many, probably the most surprising was that involving Mary Astor, star of films like *The Maltese Falcon* in which she appeared with Humphrey Bogart. She specialised in

playing strong but dignified women – and she needed all her strength and dignity to cope with the scandal that erupted when her husband sued her for divorce. Among the evidence of her adultery he supplied her diary, which revealed to the public that she had been having a long and passionate affair with the playwright George Kaufman. Even more exciting were the edited highlights, read out in court.

'Once George lays down his glasses, he is *quite* a different man,' she had written. 'His powers of recuperation are amazing, and we made love all night long . . . It all worked perfectly, and we shared our fourth climax at dawn . . .'

'Many thrilling moments . . . Twenty, count 'em diary, twenty – I don't see how he does it. He's perfect!'

'Ah, desert night – with George's body plunging into mine, naked under the stars . . .'

The public couldn't get enough of this purple prose, and in her own way Mary Astor became a kind of heroine. If the diary had been produced a decade earlier it would have ended her career, but she survived it and produced a number of fine performances. What became of the diary? It was described by the judge as pornography and burned.

Many people have puzzled over the origins of Googie Withers' unusual name. Miss Withers, who came to fame in British films in the 1940s, was in fact christened Georgette.

Vivien Leigh on Hollywood:

'I've always enjoyed working in Hollywood. They are so efficient. And it's so exhilarating.' 1964.

'I loathe Hollywood, and for no other part (Scarlett O'Hara) would I have dreamed of signing a contract. All their standards are financial ones.' 1969.

When Marilyn Monroe married playwright Arthur Miller the newspaper headlines read:

EGGHEAD WEDS HOURGLASS.

The price of fame is, for some stars, paid for by a lifetime of gimmickry. Take Jayne Mansfield, for example, who chose the colour pink as her 'trade-mark'. She lived in a pink house with rooms decorated almost entirely in pink. She drove a pink car with a pink-dyed poodle in the back seat. She always dressed in pink and when she got married she wore a pink wedding dress. On one occasion she even posed in a bath of pink champagne.

During the 1930s Gracie Fields was Britain's highest paid film star, earning £40,000 a film.

There was no official limit to the time allowed for thank-you speeches at the annual Academy Awards ceremony until Greer Garson spoke for thirty minutes after receiving her Oscar for *Mrs Miniver*. After that a time limit was imposed. Over the years it was rarely needed – until Sir Richard Attenborough's famous speech when he accepted the award for *Gandhi*. After that things were tightened up again, and now most award winners make do with a simple 'Thank you.'

Marlene Dietrich was an expert at playing the musical saw.

Mrs Patrick Campbell was a great British stage actress who, in her sixties, decided to try her luck in Hollywood. It was not an easy transition. For a start, Mrs Pat expected to be treated like a *grand dame* of society, as she was in England; unfortunately, few people in Hollywood had heard of her and they tended not to pay her the respect that she felt was her due. On the other hand, *she* arrived with no knowledge of Hollywood's reigning movie stars and did not endear herself to the film community. On one occasion she met Joan Crawford, already a big box office draw. 'My dear, you're such a pretty young thing,' said Mrs Pat. 'Have you thought of going into motion pictures?'

To make matters worse, her memory was failing added to which she found that making films was a long and boring business. At the end of one day on set, when there had been a series of retakes because she couldn't remember her lines, she asked someone what the time was. 'Five o'clock,' she was informed.

'No,' Mrs Pat persisted, 'what is the time in London?' After some calculations it was worked out that it would be one o'clock in the morning.

'As late as that?' gasped Mrs Pat. 'No wonder I'm exhausted.'

Not many people know that . . . Elizabeth Taylor was the first Hollywood star to receive $1 million for a single picture.

'I wouldn't say that I invented tack, but I definitely brought it to its present high popularity.'

Bette Midler

When Garbo stopped making films, producers started looking for another Scandinavian actress to succeed her. They found Ingrid Bergman – though not everyone gave her a warm welcome to Hollywood. With a note of panic, David O. Selznick asked, 'I note Bergman is 69½ inches tall. Is it possible she is actually this high . . .?' His concern was justified; many of his leading actors were no taller than she was.

And when George Raft was offered a part in a film with her he ungallantly replied, 'I don't want to star opposite an unknown Swedish broad.'

It was Marilyn Monroe's ambition to make a film of Dostoevsky's weighty novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

According to the publicity issued by her film studio, Merle Oberon was born in Tasmania. In fact she was born in Sri Lanka and brought up in India, and her mother was Singhalese. This had to be kept quiet throughout her career (it was only properly revealed after her death) because it would have raised the problem of inter-racial romance at a time when it was banned from the screen.

No one knows more about men, marriage and money than Hungarian-born film star Zsa Zsa Gabor. Here are just some of the things she's had to say on the subject:

During an appearance on a TV show in which celebrities offered advice to people who were experiencing problems with their relationships, one young woman asked Zsa Zsa's help: 'I want to break off my engagement to a very wealthy man who has already given me a sable coat, diamonds, a stove and a Rolls-Royce. What should I do?'

Without hesitation Zsa Zsa replied, 'Give back the stove.'

Asked about her ideal husband, she said:

'I want a man who's kind and understanding. Is that too much to ask of a millionaire?'

A confused journalist once asked Zsa Zsa how many husbands she had had. 'You mean apart from my own?' she asked.

And finally . . .

Replying to the question, 'What is the first thing you notice about a woman?', posed in a woman's magazine, Maria Callas answered, 'Her hands.'

Agatha Christie's reply was, 'Her way of speaking.'

Zsa Zsa's response? 'Her husband.'

Marlene Dietrich travelled around Hollywood in a stretch Cadillac driven by a chauffeur who, in winter, had a mink collar on his uniform and carried two revolvers at his side.

To say that Joan Crawford and Bette Davis did not like one

another would be something of an understatement. The two dominant actresses in Hollywood throughout the forties and fifties, they were intense rivals. When they actually met on set their professionalism came to the fore and they worked efficiently together. But once out of the studio . . .

Joan Crawford: 'Working with Bette Davis was one of the greatest challenges I've ever had. I meant that kindly. Bette is of a different temperament than I. She has to yell every morning. I just sat and knitted. I knitted a scarf from Hollywood to Malibu.'

Bette Davis: 'The best time I ever had with Joan Crawford was when I pushed her down the stairs in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane.*'

Elsa Lanchester on Maureen O'Hara: 'She looks as though butter wouldn't melt in her mouth – or anywhere else.'

When eighteen-year-old Harlean Carpenter's screen test was shown to Howard Hughes he took one look and declared, 'In my opinion, she's nix.' Screenwriter Joseph March couldn't believe what he saw. 'She's shaped like a dustpan!' was his comment. Miss Carpenter changed her name and became Jean Harlow.

Hollywood agents are always trying to work out ways of getting their clients more money and thus earning a better cut of it themselves. When agent Leland Hayward married his actress client Margaret Sullavan he received a telegram

reading, 'Congratulations on getting the other ninety per cent.'

'More of an act than an actress,' was the way one observer described Tallulah Bankhead, who kept Hollywood buzzing with her outrageous wit and flamboyant lifestyle. On the subject of her well-known addiction to cocaine she said, 'Cocaine isn't habit-forming. I should know – I've been using it for years.' And referring to her legendary number of lovers, she quipped, 'I'm as pure as the driven slush.'

On one occasion she passed a Salvation Army band and a tambourine was held out for her donation. She dropped a $50 note into it, and as the man thanked her for her generosity she said, 'Don't bother to thank me. I know what a perfectly ghastly season it's been for you Spanish dancers.'

Sometimes her behaviour was more shocking. When Tallulah appeared in London she received a backstage visit from Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and his sister. Soon after their arrival, it was announced that a Dr Jones had also come to pay a visit. The MacDonalds prepared to leave, but Tallulah stalled them. 'I'd like you to meet Dr Jones,' she told them. 'He's the best abortionist in London.'

Tallulah's antics constantly outraged and enthralled her audiences. On one occasion she turned cartwheels at the Ritz, displaying her total lack of underwear.

Donald Sutherland recalls his first meeting with her: 'The first time I met her, I was in my dressing room, making up. Suddenly I heard this sort of rustling, clumping noise behind me, and when I turned around, there was this totally naked woman. "What's the matter, darling?" Tallulah said. "Haven't you ever seen a blonde before?"'

This hectic lifestyle took its toll. Tallulah was too busy having a good time to worry about her career, and her

acting talents were never fully explored. Late in life, making a movie comeback, she joked wryly about the problem of age: 'They used to photograph Shirley Temple through gauze. They should photograph me through linoleum.'

Sophia Loren's mother once won a Greta Garbo lookalike contest.

During a trip to Hollywood Margot Asquith, wife of the British Prime Minister, was introduced to Jean Harlow. Miss Harlow had apparently never come across the name Margot before and asked Mrs Asquith if the 't' was pronounced or not.

'No,' came the cool reply. 'The "t" is silent – as in Harlow.'

Among the Hollywood greats who have never received an Oscar for a specific screen performance are Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland.

'I knew Doris Day before she became a virgin.'

Oscar Levant

Ginger Rogers and Rita Hayworth were first cousins.

Many performers take time off from their careers and make a come-back at a later date, but Mae West holds the record for the length of absence. She stopped filming after *The Heat's On* in 1943 and stayed away for 35 years, when she made her return in *Myra Breckinridge* in 1970.

The career of Carmen Miranda, the exotic South American singer and dancer who was most famous for wearing fruit in her hat, foundered when it was discovered that she didn't wear underwear in her films. Many of her fans boycotted her on grounds of indecency.

'Three things help me get through life successfully – an understanding husband, an extremely good analyst and millions and millions of dollars.'

Mary Tyler Moore, actress and producer

Elizabeth Taylor was given the horse she rode in *National Velvet* as a fourteenth birthday present.

When MGM decided to make *The Wizard of Oz*, there was only one star who was suitable for the part of Dorothy – and that was Shirley Temple. She was the right age for the part in the film and she could sing and dance; it was a role made for her. Unfortunately she was signed to Fox and they wouldn't release her. Fortunately for us, MGM filled the part with seventeen-year-old Judy Garland.

Other stars who got a big break because others turned down offers included Anne Bancroft, who got the part of Mrs Robinson in *The Graduate* after Jeanne Moreau refused it, and Greer Garson, whose performance in *Mrs Miniver* won many accolades. The role was originally offered to Norma Shearer, but she rejected it because Mrs Miniver was a mother – and she felt herself to be too young to play maternal roles.

Tippi Hedren landed the title role in Hitchcock's *Marnie* because the people of Monaco were shocked at the thought of Princess Grace returning to her acting profession. Eventually the Rainiers dropped the idea.

Greta Garbo's magnetic beauty was not, apparently, natural. When Louis B. Mayer first saw her after her arrival from Sweden he told her agent, 'Tell her that in America men don't like fat women.'

Marilyn Monroe was talking to a very young Jane Fonda about the effects of ageing. Fonda was optimistic: 'Just think of all the wonderful parts you can play when you're older,' she pointed out.

'No, no,' said Marilyn hastily, '*you* play them.'

When Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins were signed up to appear in *Old Acquaintance* in 1942, everyone predicted trouble – Davis and Hopkins hated each other.

Davis once said: 'What annoys me most? Unused fireplaces, pink sweet peas, badly made beds – and Miriam

Hopkins.' And Hopkins was no more complimentary about Davis.

Asked what it had been like directing them together, Vincent Sherman protested, 'I didn't direct *Old Acquaintance*, I refereed.'

Diane Keaton's Oscar for her performance in *Annie Hall* seems peculiarly appropriate when one bears in mind that her real name is Diane Hall.

It sometimes seems as if Greta Garbo is more famous for her legendary decision to give up making movies than for her actual film performances; after all, everyone knows that she became a recluse – but how many people are familiar with the films she made? Some people now believe that she didn't actually mean to retire from films at all. The theory is that, rather than accept anything she was offered, she took a break in her career while she waited for a classic film role to come along. It didn't, and by the time she realised what had happened, it was too late to make a comeback – the legend of the reclusive 'I want to be alone' Garbo had taken hold. Supporting this theory is an incident from earlier in her life, when she did something remarkably similar.

After the success of *Flesh and the Devil* Garbo went to Louis B. Mayer and asked him to increase her salary from $350 a week to $5,000 a week. Mayer offered her half of that and Garbo refused with the words, 'I think I go home.' Back to her home she went, and stayed there for seven months until in desperation Mayer agreed to her demands. But if he hadn't, the Garbo legend might well have started earlier.

Publicity writers were racking their brains to come up with a catchy line to advertise a movie starring Clark Gable and Greer Garson. They eventually devised two: 'Gable's back and Garson's got him' and 'Gable puts the arson in Garson.' The ladylike Miss Garson turned these down because they weren't gallant and came up with her own suggestion.

'Garson puts the able in Gable.'

During the filming of *Cleopatra* in Rome, the actresses hired to play slave girls went on strike because the Italian male extras kept pinching their bottoms. In the end they were assigned a bodyguard to protect them.

Rita Hayworth had a novel way of coping with all her paperwork, as Jack Lemmon discovered. He found her tearing up a pile of letters and envelopes, not even bothering to read the contents. 'Stop!' he cried in horror. 'There may be cheques in there!'

Miss Hayworth was unperturbed. 'There are,' she told him, 'and there are also bills. It evens out in the end.'

Marilyn Monroe's opinion on film censorship was straightforward: 'The trouble with censors is they worry if a girl has cleavage. They ought to worry if she hasn't any.'

TOUGH GUYS

Among male film stars Humphrey Bogart was my great hero. He was the only star I wanted an autographed photograph of when I was a kid. I wrote to Warner Brothers after seeing *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* when I was fourteen and got one back. I wonder what I'd have thought then if someone had told me that twenty-nine years later John Huston would be giving me the part he had always wanted Bogie to play in *The Man Who Would Be King*? Huston had wanted Clark Gable to play the part that Sean Connery took with me and both he and Bogart agreed to make the movie, but they were never free at the same time and that version could never be made.

Of course Humphrey Bogart was largely responsible for the creation of Michael Caine. By the time I got to London from repertory in the mid 1950s I'd changed my name from Maurice Micklewhite to Michael Scott, but I soon found out there was another Michael Scott in the business and I had to find a new surname in the course of an afternoon. I was in Leicester Square when inspiration struck. Looking round, I saw through the trees the name Caine in the title of Bogie's movie *The Caine Mutiny* which was playing at the Odeon. That clinched it and Michael Scott became Michael Caine.

As friends have said since, it was a good job the trees were in the right position or I might have ended up as Michael Mutiny or even Michael Wimpy!

I always regret that I never had the chance to meet Humphrey Bogart, although I know his wife, Betty Bacall, very well. Richard Burton once told me that he could be very cutting if you picked the wrong moment to speak to him. Burton was a great friend of Bogart's and at one

Hollywood party a new young actor who wanted to meet Bogie very badly asked Richard to introduce him.

Richard agreed and when the moment seemed right took the young actor over and said, 'Bogie, there's a young man here who would like to meet you. May I introduce Rock Hudson?'

'Rock Hudson,' said Bogart. 'Rock – huh?'

'Yes, sir,' the young actor replied.

'Well,' said Bogart, 'you look pretty soft to me, Rock.'

I've played a lot of 'tough guys' myself, but if they're the lead in a movie I find they really have to have some socially redeeming value or sympathy. With a small part, like Mortwell in *Mona Lisa*, I was able to play him as absolute scum, which I thoroughly enjoyed. With that character I had the time of my life.

Tough guy Edward G. Robinson, famous for his portrayals of gangsters, was actually a very refined and educated man who hated some of the things he had to do in his roles. He also hated the sound of gunfire. During the making of the film that rocketed him to stardom, *Little Caesar*, he had to fire a gun. Each time he did it, he squeezed up his eyes in anticipation of the noise, and each time filming stopped. Then the make-up department found the answer. If they taped his eyelids open, he couldn't grimace as he fired.

James Dean was a great disappointment to Jack Warner of the Warner Brothers studio. When he heard that Dean had been killed in a car crash Warner's reported words were, 'How could he *do* this to me after all my work to build him up into a big star?'

John Wayne's real name was Marion Robert Morrison and it was under that name that he played American football for the University of Southern California. The football team was known as the 'Thundering Herd', and they were great favourites of movie heroine Clara Bow who, it was revealed, had taken every single one of them on during one particularly boozy party.

Before he became a film star, Bob Hope boxed under the name Packy East.

As he sat watching the rushes (unedited scenes filmed the day before) of *Marked Woman*, a story about gangland life, Hal Wallis was annoyed to see a very unconvincing extra on the screen. The man was small and puny – he didn't look anything like a gangster. What's more, he couldn't act. Wallis called the director in and asked why they hadn't been able to get someone who looked the part. The director was apologetic.

'He's one of Lucky Luciano's favourite gang members,' he explained. 'We put him in the picture to make it look authentic.'

Before he teamed up with Stan Laurel, genial comic Oliver Hardy made a reputation playing screen villains.

When Marlon Brando arrived in Hollywood, film-makers saw in him the qualities that had made Humphrey Bogart a star. Bogart wasn't impressed: 'I came out here with one suit and everybody thought I was a bum; when Brando came out with one sweat-shirt, the town drooled over him.'

It's funny to recall how some of the silver screen's great stars were first spotted – and how easily they could have been overlooked. Sam Goldwyn was holding a meeting to discuss his studio's latest film one day. The main problem, he explained to those assembled, was to find an actor to play the part of a cowboy. It was an important role but not a huge one. The actor had to be exactly right. 'Hold on a minute,' said a screenwriter who was present. She went

outside to Goldwyn's secretary's office where a young man in cowboy gear had caught her eye as she'd come in. Sure enough, he was still there chatting with the secretary. 'Are you an actor?' asked the screenwriter.

Yes, he was, he told her. She took him into the meeting, and just a few minutes later he'd been signed to make the film. He worked hard and well and everyone was pleased with his scenes, but no one took much notice of him. At the end of filming everyone went their own way and he was forgotten. The film was released, and everyone was surprised when the cowboy received rave reviews for his performance. Only then did it finally dawn on someone that in Gary Cooper they had a star!

Agents are famed the world over for their meanness. One such was Montgomery Clift's agent who, when asked if his client would make a cameo appearance in *Judgement at Nuremberg* for a reduced fee, refused. Clift, infuriated, did the part for nothing and sent the agent an empty paper bag and a note explaining that it was his commission.

According to Johnny Weissmuller, the greatest screen Tarzan of them all, he landed the role by accident. He called at the film studio to visit Clark Gable, who was a friend of his, but found that the guard at the gate wouldn't let him in. Then someone mentioned that they were auditioning for *Tarzan*. The guard agreed to let him in if he went to the screen test, and so Weissmuller joined seventy or so other hopefuls. He got the job!

Clark Gable was rejected for the lead role in the gangster movie *Little Caesar* because the producer thought he was too ugly. Then they signed Edward G. Robinson for the part!

William S. Hart star of many silent westerns, once got involved in an extraordinary fight. Before the filming of a punch-up scene in a bar, Hart was introduced to the extra with whom he'd be fighting. The man was big, but he seemed to listen as Hart explained how the fight would go. They'd throw some punches, taking care not to hit each other too hard, and then when Hart felt that there had been enough fighting he'd shout 'Go!' – which was the man's cue to topple over, defeated. Hart repeated himself several times, and stressed that his opponent must not continue the fight after he'd yelled that magic word, 'Go!'

The scene started and punches began to fly. Hart was surprised that the extra was hitting so hard, so he began to belt him back with full strength. After a number of swings that looked very realistic because they were, he yelled 'Go!' The extra kept fighting and showed no sign of keeling over. 'Go, go, go!' cried Hart – but the man kept coming. Hart was so furious that he turned on him for real. They slugged it out, and eventually he got his man to the floor where he laid into him hard. He was eventually pulled off, and a doctor had to be called to treat the extra's cuts and bruises. Hart was extremely angry – until someone raced up and explained that it wasn't really the extra's fault. He was stone deaf and he hadn't heard a thing he'd been told!

'The trouble with the world is that everybody in it is three drinks behind.'

Humphrey Bogart

Anxious to make the chariot race in the 1926 version of *Ben Hur* look as authentic and exciting as possible, the producers offered the winner a bonus of $150 – and there were prizes for second and third place, too. The stuntmen responded with the enthusiasm the producers had hoped for.

Errol Flynn used a pinch of cocaine on the end of his penis as an aphrodisiac.

When Ronald Reagan was a Hollywood actor he made a film called *Storm Warning*, about the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. On location in a town which was said to have strong Klan associations, the actors and crew were understandably nervous. During the filming of one scene, Reagan was approached by a stranger. 'I hear the movie is about the Klan,' he muttered.

Reagan admitted that it was, and waited for trouble. 'Well, I'm in the local outfit,' said the man, 'and if you need to rent some robes, let me know.'

Gregory Peck was the first Oscar-winner to have been born in California – strange when one considers how many people in that state had been involved, with the movie business.

One of James Cagney's first film roles was in *The Millionaire*; he played a smooth character. Sadly the part didn't suit him and Darryl Zanuck, who had spotted his talent and signed him up, was disappointed with the result. One day as Zanuck watched the scenes that had just been filmed and pondered the problem, an unedited piece of film was shown. At the end of the shot, when the action was over, Cagney turned to the camera and with a disgusted snarl on his lips said, 'For God's sake, who wrote this crap?' His face was transformed – and in a split second Zanuck knew that this tough, hard-talking character was just right for the gangster roles he was having so much trouble casting. James Cagney's place in the Hollywood Hall of Fame was guaranteed!

It's true – Alan Ladd really did stand on boxes for his scenes with tall leading ladies. And if they were shown going for a walk together, she walked in a trench.

'My acting technique is to look up at God just before the camera rolls and say "Give me a break".'

James Caan

Douglas Fairbanks enjoyed performing physical feats so much that he never used a double for a stunt if he could possibly do it himself. On one occasion, while filming *Robin Hood*, there was a scene in which Robin had to break into a castle by climbing the chain of the drawbridge. It was

The original Gonville Bromhead was dark-haired, stood 5'6" and had a black beard, so I wasn't exactly his double in *Zulu* but, fortunately, little details like that didn't do my career any harm. *(Kobal Collection)*

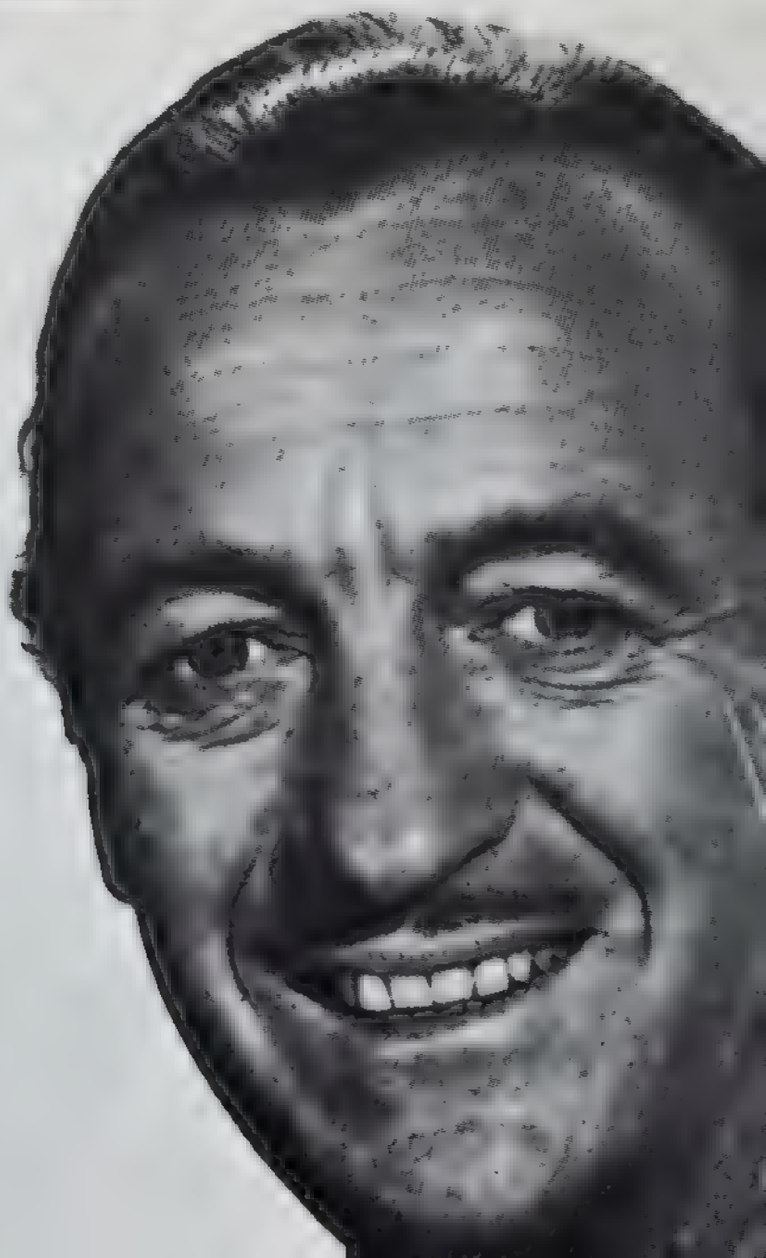
Snapping Shelley Winters in *Alfie*. *(Kobal Collection)*

On location in Morocco, shooting *The Man Who Would Be King*, with Sean Connery. *(Kobal Collection/Columbia Pictures Corporation)*

My wife, Shakira, had an unexpected taste of movie work when John Huston announced that he wanted her to play the female lead in *The Man Who Would Be King. (Kobal Collection)*

John Huston was the best and most economical film director I ever worked with. He pictured the whole movie in his mind before shooting began, which made life easier for his actors. *(Kobal Collection)*

Humphrey Bogart was the only movie star whose autographed photo I really wanted — and I got it! *(Kobal Collection)*



My old friend David Niven. Recently I found myself playing a role that he'd originally created, and filming it around our old milieu on the French Riviera. *(Kobal Collection)*

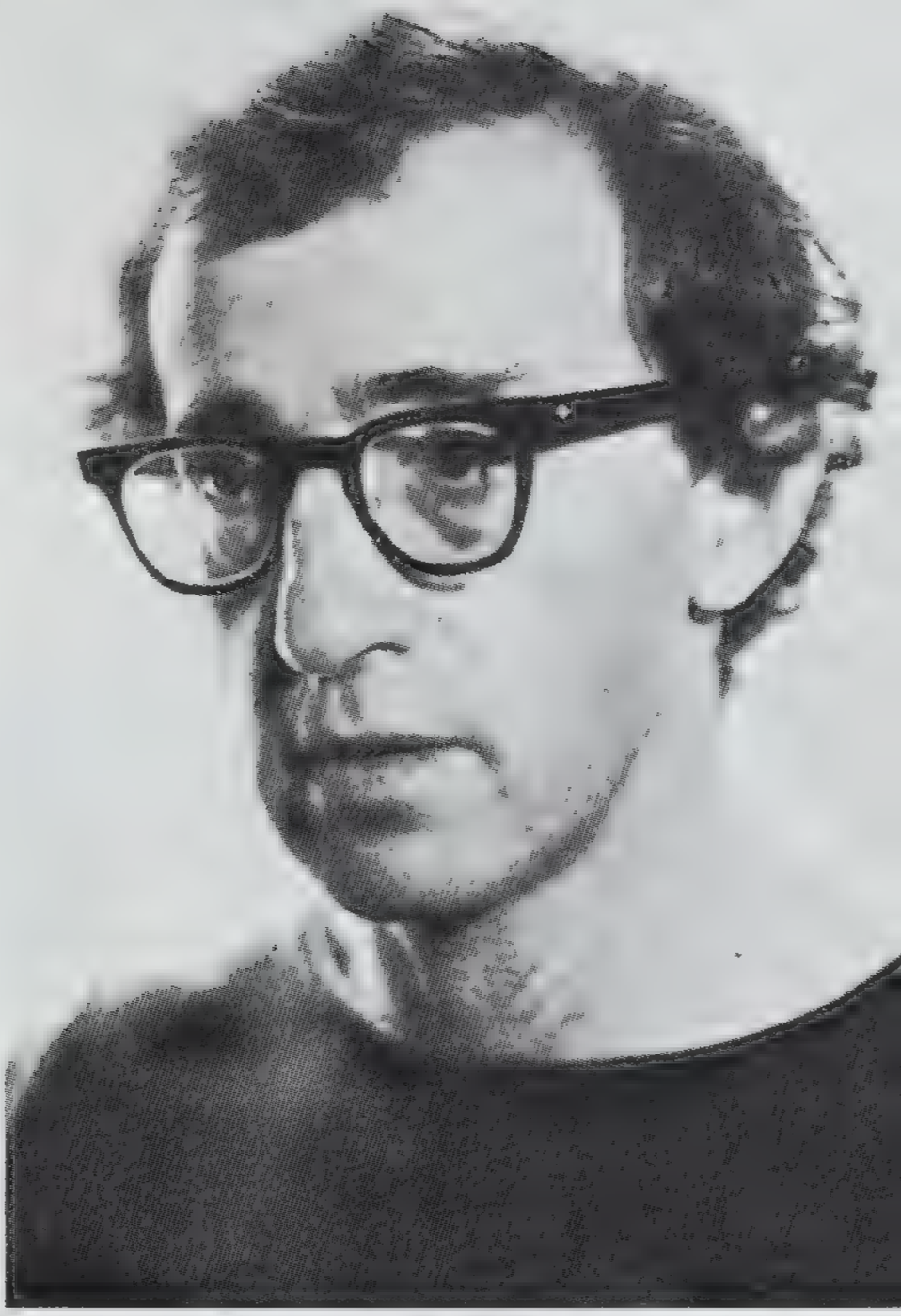
Spencer Tracy was, in my opinion, the greatest screen actor of all time. With him you never saw the machinery at work, just the great performance. *(Kobal Collection/Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)*

Meryl Streep — the latest in a long and distinguished line of Hollywood's most brilliant actresses. *(Kobal Collection/Paramount Pictures Corporation)*

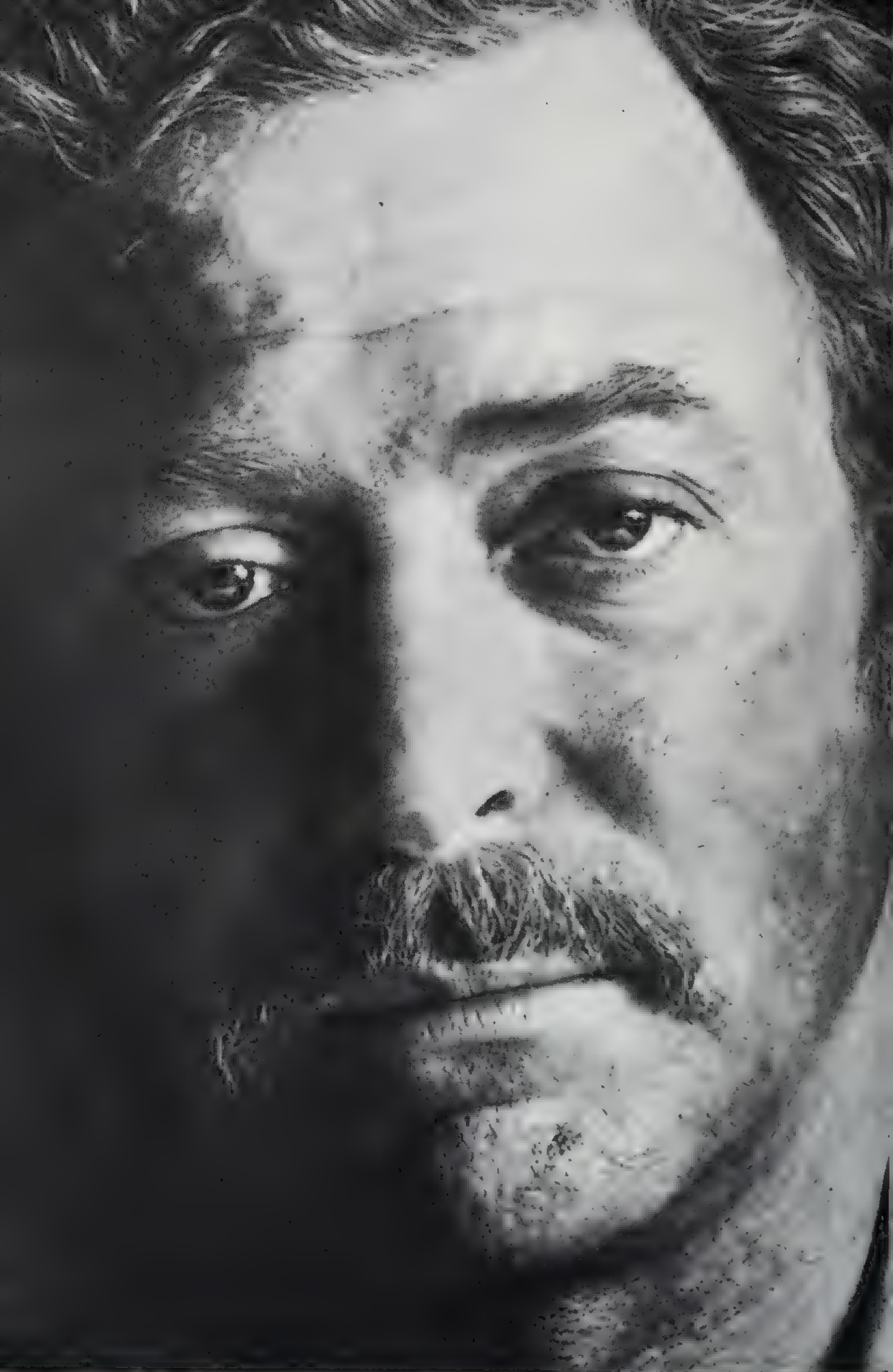
When making *The Swarm*, that pale jacket kept getting marked with tiny black dots. I soon found out what they were and who to thank for them — the bees! *(Kobal Collection)*

Student turned teacher when Julie Walters got me in the chair in *Educating Rita. (Kobal Collection)*

The private but prolific Woody Allen is, as far as I'm concerned, a writer of great genius — and that's not just because I won an Oscar in his film *Hannah and Her Sisters!* *(Kobal Collection)*



Playing Mia Farrow's (Hannah's) husband in *Hannah and Her Sisters* *(Kobal Collection)*



The Honorary Consul. (Kobal Collection)

dangerous and the director banned a disgruntled Fairbanks from doing it himself.

The day came to film the scene and the stuntman, dressed and made up to look like the star, attempted the climb. The result was disappointing – he clambered up clumsily and heavily. It was decided to film the scene again the next day, this time using a different stuntman. The replacement duly arrived on set, heavily made up and wearing the costume. The cameras began to roll; the new man leapt lightly up the chain and with great athleticism made his way to the castle ramparts. Everyone was delighted. Then they noticed that the stuntman was taking a huge bow and grinning broadly. It was Fairbanks himself.

He loved performing stunts so much that he often improvised and added them to the action without telling anyone. For a scene in which he was trapped on the roof of a house, he got down by leaping into a tree, catching a branch and dropping gently to the ground. According to the script, he was supposed to go back into the house. For a scene in which he and his leading lady were shown in front of a fallen tree with its roots in the air, the director suggested that he might try to climb the roots which reached about fifteen feet high. Fairbanks didn't bother climbing. He went over to a nearby sapling, bent it double and catapulted himself into position.

But there was one stunt which was so spectacular, no one could understand how it was done. It happened in *Robin Hood* and also in *The Black Pirate*. In the first film, Fairbanks was trapped on a balcony high above the ground. To escape, he thrust his sword into the sixty-foot high curtain that trailed down the side of the balcony and, holding the blade at the right angle with both hands, whizzed down to the ground. In the pirate film he performed the same trick with a huge sail.

Everyone wanted to know how he had done it. Surely no one – not even Douglas Fairbanks – had arms and wrists strong enough to keep the sword stuck into the curtain at the precise angle required? Eventually he revealed the

secret. On the other side of the curtain was a large board into which the sword had been bolted. But despite this sleight of hand, it was still a phenomenal stunt.

Incidentally, Fairbanks was so popular, and *Robin Hood* such a resounding success when it was launched in 1922, that conductors on trams stopping outside the cinema where it was showing just yelled, 'All out for *Robin Hood*' instead of telling people the official name of the stop.

'Not since Attila the Hun swept across Europe leaving 500 years of total blackness has there been a man like Lee Marvin.' Director Joshua Logan after working with Marvin on *Paint Your Wagon*.

'You're not a star until they can spell your name in Karachi.'

Humphrey Bogart

When Charlton Heston played the part of Moses, he insisted that the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which he had to carry down from Mount Sinai, were actually made of stone quarried from the mountain itself. The props department duly obliged presumably at great expense, but when the time came to film the scene he could scarcely lift them. It was instantly agreed that adequate replacements could be made of wood.

In another Biblical epic Heston played John the Baptist, for which he had to strip off and stand in the Colorado River. After 'baptising' many extras, some of whom almost passed out with the shock of the chilly water, he told the

director, 'If the Jordan had been as cold as the Colorado, Christianity would never have got off the ground.'

'A blonde drove me to drink, and my one regret is that I never thanked her.'

'I make it a habit to keep a reasonable supply of medicinal stimulants on hand in case I encounter a venomous snake – which I always keep on hand.'

'There's no such thing as a tough child – if you parboil them first for seven hours, they always come out tender.'

W. C. Fields

Bud Abbott, of Abbott and Costello fame, collected weapons. Included in his gun collection was Adolf Hitler's shotgun.

Charlton Heston predicted the rise of Ronald Reagan to the White House! Reagan was President of the Screen Actors Guild at a time when the members of the Guild went on strike. Heston spent a lot of time with him, going to meetings and working all night to try and get things resolved. When he arrived home in the morning his wife asked, 'How'd it go?' And Heston's reply?

'Honey, we've got a real President!'

And Heston wasn't the only one. In a prophetic article about Ronald Reagan in a 1947 edition of *Film* magazine a journalist wrote, 'He never really felt like an actor at all, his real interest might lie in public service of another kind. Perhaps politics . . .'

And if you need further proof that Ronald Reagan was destined to be President, there's this story.

During the filming of *King's Row* in 1942, Reagan bored some of his co-stars with his constant talk of political matters. One of them finally suggested, 'Ronald, you ought to run for President.'

Reagan was surprised. 'President of what?' he asked.

'President of the United States.'

'Oh,' he said, his face falling. 'Does this mean you don't like my acting either?'

Clint Eastwood owned a Mercedes car that had previously belonged to Pope John Paul I, who died after only 34 days on the Papal throne in 1978.

Sean Connery, the best James Bond of all, refused to take a screen test for the part. He told Cubby Broccoli, 'You take me as I am or not at all.' Broccoli took him.

Ian Fleming was not pleased. According to movie legend, when he first met Connery, who was being hotly tipped for the role, he said, 'I'm looking for Commander James Bond, not an overgrown stuntman.'

In his early films Charlton Heston was often cast as the hero

of historical epics. After completing one such movie he commented: 'After spending all of last winter in armour it's a great relief to wear costume that bends.'

Being a Method actor, Marlon Brando believed in preparing meticulously for each role he played. In one film he was cast as a World War II veteran who had lost the use of his legs. To get into the part he spent some weeks living with real army paraplegics, finding out about their lives and learning how to control a wheelchair. There's a story told that one day he and his new friends went out for a drink and while they were in the bar a Salvation Army lady came in and saw them. Shocked by their plight she raised her hands in prayer and said, 'Lord, grant that these men may be able to walk again.' Unable to resist the temptation, Brando got to his feet and walked . . .

'Acting is not an important job in the scheme of things. Plumbing is.'

Spencer Tracy

Few Hollywood stars have generated more stories than W. C. Fields, whose prickly personality and eccentric lifestyle have made him a legend. His drinking habits were notorious. 'I must have a drink of breakfast,' and 'I exercise extreme self-control. I never drink anything stronger than gin before breakfast,' are two of his most famous quotes. On the film set he was always accompanied by a flask of ready-mixed martinis, which he claimed was nothing

stronger than pineapple juice. One day someone decided to call his bluff. When Fields next poured himself a drink there was a furious cry. 'Someone's put pineapple juice in my pineapple juice!' One intrepid female journalist asked him why he never drank water. He had a simple answer for her: 'Because fish fuck in it.'

He was also famous for his dislike of children and animals. Asked if he liked children, he once replied, 'Yes – if they're properly cooked.' This was all rather unfortunate for child actor Baby Le Roy, with whom he co-starred in a number of comedies. At the time it was widely rumoured that Fields spiked Baby Le Roy's milk with gin and then, when Le Roy was unable to continue filming, strode around the set proclaiming, 'That kid's no trouper!'

Another of his bugbears was money. Having experienced poverty in his early years, Fields was determined he'd never go short later in life. He salted his cash away in dozens of bank accounts all over America, many of them under assumed names. The problem was, he often couldn't remember which banks the money was in – or which names he'd used. Showing a hard head for business (or an extreme lack of patriotism, if you prefer), he also kept $50,000 invested in Germany during the war, 'in case that little bastard (Hitler) wins.'

Fields' legendary cynical wit accompanied him to his deathbed. Knowing him to be an agnostic, visitors were surprised to find him leafing through a Bible as he lay sick. 'I'm just looking for a loophole,' he explained.

Cliff Robertson on the film business: 'This isn't exactly a stable business. It's like trying to stand up in a canoe with your pants down.'

In the great days of film-making, Hollywood had a reputation for being Sin City. All kinds of rumours circulated about the orgies that went on there under the title of 'parties'. Errol Flynn had as an acquaintance a Washington diplomat who was determined to be invited to one of these parties, and he constantly pestered Flynn to get him an invitation. Eventually Flynn complied. The diplomat arrived at the house and was thrilled to have the door opened by a girl wearing only stockings and a maid's cap.

She ushered him into the hall and showed him into the 'undressing room', which was littered with clothing. He quickly removed his own and, stark naked, followed her down the hall to where the sound of a party was coming from behind a door. The girl opened the door, announced his name and the diplomat walked expectantly into the room. There was a hushed silence as thirty fully-clothed guests stared disapprovingly at the new arrival.

'Some day I would like a part where I can lean my elbow against a mantelpiece and have a cocktail.' Charles 'Death Wish' Bronson. He's still waiting.

When Clint Eastwood was elected Mayor of Carmel in 1986, one disgruntled opponent said bitterly, referring to Eastwood's movies *Every Which Way But Loose* and *Any Which Way You Can*, in which he'd starred with an orangutan: 'What makes him think a middle-aged movie actor who's played with a chimp can have a future in politics?'

Maybe Eastwood should have referred his critic to a movie called *Bedtime For Bonzo*, which starred a chimp and a young Ronald Reagan.

How did John Wayne come to get his nickname, Duke? From his majestic bearing? From his regal acting? Not quite. In fact he had a dog called Duke who had the bad habit of chasing fire engines. The firemen didn't know his owner's name, so they called *him* Duke, too. John Wayne, star of more than 100 tough-guy movies, was named after a dog!

Humphrey Bogart enjoyed playing jokes on his friends. On one occasion he told Ann Sheridan that Warner's, the studio to which they were both contracted, had just bought the rights to a best-selling book – and that she would be perfect for the lead in the film version. He told her the name of the character and, despite the fact that she didn't know the story, she began to spread the word that she was interested. Eventually someone took her aside and explained what the role of Fanny Hill entailed.

Charles Buchinski, an aspiring actor, was driving down Hollywood Boulevard and stopped for traffic lights by Bronson Street. He liked the name so much that he adopted it himself and became Charles Bronson.

It's said – though how true it is no one really knows – that when John Wayne came to deliver his one line in *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, it was suggested after the first take that he gave it a bit more awe. After all, he was playing the part of a centurion at Christ's crucifixion, who was supposed to have been suddenly converted. On the next

take, so legend goes, he came out with 'Aw, truly this man was the Son of God.'

Despite the fame and fortune acting has brought him, Marlon Brando doesn't think very highly of it. 'Acting is an empty and useless profession,' he's reported as saying. 'Acting is the expression of a neurotic impulse. It's a bum's life. Quitting acting, that's the sign of maturity.'

Not only did he disapprove of acting, but Brando also had this to say about actors. 'An actor's a guy who, if you ain't talking about him, ain't listening.'

Of course, Brando was no stranger to criticism himself. Rex Reed once described his performance with the words, 'Most of the time he sounds like he has a mouth full of wet toilet paper.'

There's a story told that during the making of one film, in which he had to speak with an English accent, Brando became very friendly with a young British actor playing a bit part. During working hours Brando went around with him – something which surprised other members of the cast. On the last day of filming the young actor, who was going back to England, suggested that they exchange addresses and keep in touch, but Brando didn't want to know. It didn't take long for the young man to realise that, with the filming completed, the star didn't need to study an English accent any more.

Some tough guys find romance difficult. Take Errol Flynn. While filming *The Charge of the Light Brigade* he fell in love with his co-star, Olivia de Havilland. In his attempts to woo her, Flynn played a number of practical jokes – including

hiding a dead snake in her panties just before she put them on. Alas, Miss de Havilland was not amused.

In the heyday of Hollywood, individual stars were signed up to make films for a single studio. Their contracts could last as long as seven years, and during that time they were expected to take pretty much what the studio offered.

When Clark Gable turned down a number of films offered by MGM because he felt the roles weren't good enough, they punished him by lending him to Columbia, who hadn't had a hit for ages and were looked down on by everyone else. The same fate was meted out to Claudette Colbert, who was refusing to toe the Paramount line. Columbia teamed the pair in *It Happened One Night*, which scooped Oscars for Best Film, Best Actor and Best Actress – thus improving the status of the two 'difficult' stars and transforming its own reputation overnight.

'I've got to don my breastplate once more to go play opposite Miss Tits,' said Richard Burton, before he met and fell in love with Elizabeth Taylor while working on *Cleopatra*.

Despite his exotic name, Boris Karloff was English. He was born plain William Pratt and often used to turn out for the Hollywood cricket team. His most famous roles were as monsters, most notably as Dr Frankenstein's monster. This was a trend that had been started early on in his life, as he explained: 'When I was nine I played the demon king in

Cinderella and it launched me on a long and happy life of being a monster.'

Kirk Douglas's real name is Issur Danielovich Demsky, and he was once a wrestling champion.

In his book *Bring On the Empty Horses*, David Niven tells how Errol Flynn and director John Huston found themselves at a dull Hollywood party. Both were famous for their love of punch-ups, so when Huston suggested alleviating the boredom by going down to the bottom of the garden for a fight, Flynn agreed. While the other guests tried to concentrate on their dinner the sound of thumps and groans came filtering in through the open windows. And when the brawl was finally over, both Flynn and Huston had to go to hospital for treatment.

Clark Gable's birth certificate mistakenly listed him as a girl.

Gary Cooper, slow-talking star of more than fifty movies, was a favourite with film-goers for more than twenty years. He didn't always have the glamour of the Flynns and the Gables, but there was something solid and dependable about him that people loved. He explained his success like this:

'People ask me how come you've been around so long. Well, it's through playing the part of Mr Average Joe American.'

In 1945 he made the film *Along Came Jones*. Before filming started the scriptwriter gave Cooper a copy of the book on which the story was based. 'Did you like the book?' he asked a couple of weeks later.

Cooper said he had. 'I'm about halfway through it,' he replied. 'I'm reading it word by word.'

Cooper was famous for the way he used to 'think' on the screen. It was as if you could see emotions and ideas going through his mind. A young actor, desperate to find out how he did it, asked him the secret of this incredible concentration.

Cooper was flummoxed. 'Concentration? Bullshit!' he said. 'I'm just trying to remember what the hell I have to say next!'

Sean Connery was once arrested for a motoring offence by Sergeant James Bond.

Henry Fonda told the story of the first time he was given a film script. It was for a movie version of a stage play in which he had appeared and he read it with growing alarm – for in many of the scenes a strange character called Dolly appeared. Although she never said anything, she seemed to accompany the actors wherever they went.

'Molly crosses to door and walks into bar,' read the puzzled Fonda. 'Dolly goes with her.' At last he went to the director. 'Who is this Dolly?' he demanded. 'If she doesn't say anything, why include her?'

The director laughed. Then he lead the embarrassed

Fonda across the studio floor to where a camera was positioned on board a low trolley which travelled alongside the actors as they moved about the set. 'That,' explained the director, 'is a dolly.'

Then he pointed out that a film script, unlike a stage script, contained two sets of directions; one for the actor and one for the camera. Down the left side of each page was written the name of the characters, their lines and their stage directions. On the right-hand side of the page were the camera directions. By reading straight across the page from left to right you put the two sets of directions together. That was Henry Fonda's first lesson in film-making.

Humphrey Bogart was Princess Diana's seventh cousin twice removed. As a child his picture was used to advertise Melluis Baby Food.

Burt Reynolds, John Wayne and Humphrey Bogart are just three of the stars who have worn wigs to cover their bald or balding heads. And although they haven't yet resorted to toupees, both John Travolta and Bruce Willis are suffering from rapidly receding hairlines. Travolta was so worried about his that a couple of years ago he was said to be spending $350 a week on lotions and potions in an attempt to prevent his locks thinning.

READY WHEN YOU ARE, C.B. . . .

Cecil B. de Mille is a popular stereotype of the old style Hollywood director, but among the directors I've worked with I found John Huston outstanding. He had the gift of being able to cut in his mind and as a result he used an economy of shooting which made working with him so much easier than with other directors, who didn't have the powers of imagination that let Huston see the whole picture in his mind.

You could start filming a master shot with him and almost immediately he'd be able to say, 'OK, cut here. I'll be in close by then.' Lots of directors who also make very good movies do great long takes of master shots, great long takes of two shots, great long takes of close-ups, great long takes of over-the-shoulder ones – the whole scene in fact, but doing everything over and over again. Then they get into the cutting room and edit it all together to produce the finished movie. But working like that is exhausting for the actors. By the time you get to the close-ups, which are the most important shots, you're dying, especially if it's a big emotional scene.

It's the thought of those months of post-production work that put me off the idea of directing: I know they'd drive me nuts. Being a director is also a terrible responsibility. The strain is enormous. From first buying the material to the première you can reckon on eighteen months of agony.

However, the technical side of directing is something I know I would find interesting. There have been occasions on set when I've given a tip or suggested a way of doing something to actors in front of the cameras for the first time, and I gave a TV workshop on film acting on BBC 2 not so long ago which I enjoyed very much.

You can't tell anybody how to act. You can't tell anybody how to be a star. All I did on that programme was to explain some of the techniques you pick up from working on films, things like getting your upstage eye nearer the camera by looking at the other actor's downstage eye, not blinking – little details like that.

Hitting your marks (walking to the right spot on the floor) can be tricky especially in a scene when you're trying to tell a girl you love her. What I learned to do was to stand on the mark and say my line as I walk backwards. In that way I know I'll end up in the right place when I come back with it.

Points like this seem so simple when someone explains them to you, but they can be very worrying if you're getting them wrong. That's where a good director can really help to bring the best out of his actors.

There's a wonderful story told about Cecil B. De Mille that has become so much a part of Hollywood folklore that no one knows for certain whether it ever had any basis in truth. De Mille was preparing to film a scene in one of his famous Biblical epics. It was a tremendously difficult set up; hundreds of extras dressed in armour had to run about across the set, massive pieces of scenery had to topple and thousands of gallons of water had to be let loose in a tidal wave. It could be shot only once, so De Mille spent the entire day rehearsing and positioning his actors and cameras. By late afternoon everything was ready. The cue was given; the extras surged, the buildings fell, the water gushed, all according to plan. 'Did you get that, Camera One?' asked De Mille.

'It was perfect,' came the reply.

'Camera Two?'

'Everything's fine here.'

'Camera Three?'

'It looked great from here.'

'How about you, Camera Four?'

'Ready when you are, C. B. . . .'

On his arrival in France, a customs official examined Alfred Hitchcock's passport and noted that his occupation was described as 'Producer'. 'What do you produce?' he asked.

'Gooseflesh,' replied Hitchcock.

Hitchcock invented a wonderful way of getting round the ruling that screen kisses could last no longer than three seconds. In *Notorious* he showed his stars kissing for the prescribed time, then speaking a few words before kissing briefly again, nibbling each other's ears and kissing again – and so on. At no point were their lips in contact for more than three seconds, but it was a sensational love scene. And there was nothing the censor could do about it!

When Laurence Olivier was signed to play the part of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* he wanted Vivien Leigh to play the part of Cathy. The director, William Wyler, turned that idea down but offered her the smaller part of Isabella, saying, 'You're totally unknown in America and you won't get anything better for your first Hollywood part.' A few months later she was offered the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* . . .

In his book *Bring on the Empty Horses* David Niven tells of film director Michael Curtiz's problems with the English language. The two of them worked together on *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and Niven was present when Curtiz, directing a sequence on a battlefield set, cued the release of a hundred riderless steeds with the words, 'Bring on the empty horses.' Niven and his friend Errol Flynn fell around laughing, much to the fury of Curtiz who cried:

'You and your stinking language! You think I know fuck nothing. Well, let me tell you, I know fuck all!'

Another time he sent someone on an errand in the studio and they bungled it. 'The next time I send a damn fool I go myself,' muttered Curtiz.

On a third occasion he was busy arranging a shot on a beach. The scene required the careful positioning of three hundred extras who had to wait and watch while a motor launch appeared and then docked at the nearby quay. The hours had ticked by, but by 11 a.m. they were ready to shoot. Curtiz picked up his megaphone. 'Launch!' he cried – and every single extra turned, left their marks and went for lunch. The scene had to be delayed until they had eaten.

Warner Brothers, for whom he made many films, became aware of this problem of accent and language when one studio executive discovered that Curtiz could not distinguish between different English accents. He'd cast

actors who spoke with a Cockney twang in roles that required cut-glass tones. They were in time to save the film, and after that his choices were vetted.

As well as being famous for these verbal slips ('This man Cole Porter, he sticked to purpose of making good music, come hell or hayride' was another of them) Curtiz was also famous for his brusqueness when it came to auditions. When he was looking for an actor to play Errol Flynn's friend in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, a dozen young men were dressed in military uniforms and boots, given four pages of script and sent along to one of the sound stages. British actor David Niven was among them. One by one each was called up in front of the great man and went through the scene; and one by one Curtiz rudely told them to go away.

By the time it was Niven's turn to tackle the scene, he hadn't any idea how to play the lines. 'Where's your script?' asked Curtiz. Niven explained that he'd memorised his lines and the script wasn't necessary. Curtiz just repeated the question. Niven explained that he'd left it in the dressing room – at the other end of the studio. Curtiz told him to run and get it. For a moment he considered the order. It was incredibly hot and the dressing room was a long distance away. Anyway, he didn't have the slightest hope of getting the part. 'You ––––,' he said, 'run and get it yourself.' To his utter amazement. Curtiz turned to his assistant and said:

'This man gets the part!'

Errol Flynn was ideally cut out to play swashbuckling heroes, and he enjoyed the physical side of the fights and action – except when he was working with Curtiz. During the filming of *Captain Blood* in 1935 Curtiz had insisted on taking the protective tips off the actors' swords during the fight scenes; he'd insisted that it was for extra realism – real blood! On another occasion Flynn was filming a scene where extras had to throw spears at him. Realising with horror that they were real spears capable of inflicting major injury, Flynn dodged his way through them and dashed

towards Curtiz, the weapons still flying around him. Curtiz promptly yelled, 'Lunch!' and ran for cover.

Another director whose accent was the cause of much amusement was Gregory Ratoff, who made *Footlight Serenade* with Betty Grable and Victor Mature. Miss Grable was famous for her wicked sense of humour, and she rose to the bait when Ratoff was explaining a scene in which she, playing a chorus girl, tried to win the attention of Mature, playing a boxer.

'You have to play up to heem,' coaxed Ratoff. 'You want to suck heem' – meaning 'suck up to him'. The crew exploded with laughter. When filming resumed, just before the cameras rolled Miss Grable motioned to her co-star's flies and suggested to the director, 'I suck heem now?' Cue for even more uproar!

The England portrayed on film by the Hollywood directors was often, as far as they were concerned, better than the real thing. For his version of *David Copperfield* in 1935 George Cukor boasted: 'We shot the White Cliffs of Dover near Malibu and I have to say that our cliffs were altogether better: they were both whiter and cliffier.'

King Vidor on one of his flops: 'The picture was so bad they had to do re-takes before they could put it back on the shelf.'

Cecil B. De Mille created so many Biblical epics and developed such a high opinion of himself in the process that he became the butt of many jokes in Hollywood. One of the best told of the arrival of a psychiatrist at the Pearly Gates. St Peter came racing out to greet him. 'Thank goodness you've arrived! We're worried about God,' he explained. 'He thinks he's Cecil B. De Mille.'

On occasion, however, he could be warm-hearted. Too busy to bother with looking at the menu and ordering lunch each day, he instructed his secretary to choose his meals for him. She selected what she thought was a balanced diet and as he seemed to enjoy everything she ordered for him she arranged for the same meals to be served each week. One day news came from the studio kitchen that they were sorry but Mr De Mille's pea soup, which he always had on a Thursday, was off. He'd have to have something else instead. The secretary nervously broke the news to her boss, fearful that there would be a row about it. Instead he smiled. 'I thought you'd be upset,' she said.

'To tell you the truth,' he admitted, 'I hate pea soup.'

'But you always have it every week – and you finish every drop.'

'I know,' said her boss. 'I used to eat it because you were so pleased about choosing the right menu and I didn't want to hurt your feelings.'

Jokes and lunch aside, no one could deny that De Mille was a great director. He was particularly talented when it came to managing large crowd scenes. Other directors had difficulty making their crowds act convincingly, but De Mille managed to get something extra out of them. His technique was revealed one day during a scene in which he wanted the crowd to express silent awe. For some reason they couldn't do it properly. They were dismissed from the set, but later De Mille gathered them together and in hushed tones announced that someone whom they all knew and liked had just suffered a tragic family bereavement. It would be a good idea, he suggested, to have a minute's silence as a mark of respect. Heads bowed, and visibly

affected by the news, the extras stood quietly and contemplated mortality. Meanwhile the cameras were busy capturing the moment – and very good it looked in the finished film. The reaction of the extras when they realised that nothing De Mille had said was true has *not* been recorded!

George Cukor was originally signed up to direct *Gone With the Wind*, but within a few days of filming he was suddenly removed from the project and replaced by Victor Fleming. At the time this unusual move was glossed over with the explanation that Cukor was known to be a brilliant director of actresses, but Clark Gable wanted a man's director. However, according to Kenneth Anger in his book *Hollywood Babylon II*, the reason was far more tortuous – and intriguing.

George Cukor was gay, and among his friends he included the one-time actor William Haines. Haines's career in films had come to an abrupt end when he was arrested by the vice squad for picking up a young man and taking him back to his hotel room. He later established himself as an interior decorator and remained prominent in the Hollywood community. According to Cukor, when Clark Gable joined the MGM studio as a bit-part actor he'd had a couple of 'liaisons' with Haines, then a star; presumably Gable thought this might improve his career prospects.

Several years later, with Haines disgraced and Gable firmly established as the King of Hollywood, Gable accepted the part of Rhett Butler in *Gone With the Wind* – and discovered that Cukor was to direct it. According to Cukor, who kept it all a secret until late in his life, Gable was mortified and couldn't look him in the eye. He assumed that Haines would have passed on the story and that Cukor knew everything. Rather than face the embarrassment of

working with him every day, he put pressure on the studio to fire the director.

Carole Lombard on Orson Welles: 'I can't win, working with Welles. If the picture's a hit he gets all the credit, and if it's a flop I get all the blame.'

The director Otto Preminger invited Jewish comedian Mort Sahl to be his guest at the première of *Exodus*, a film about Jewish history and the founding of the state of Israel. Sahl went along, but after three hours of the four-hour epic he got to his feet and said despairingly, 'Otto – let my people go!'

D. W. Griffith was the first director to make a film more than 1,000 feet long.

At the Ealing Studios the directors had a dining-room to themselves. When a man called Dean was in charge, it was known to the other Ealing workers as the Deanery. He was succeeded by Baker, and it became the Bakery. In turn his place was taken by Michael Balcon, and the room became the Balcony.

Alfred Hitchcock was once credited with saying, 'Actors are cattle. Disney has the right idea. He draws them and if he doesn't like them he tears them up.'

Later he denied he'd said that actors were like cattle. 'I meant that actors should be *treated* like cattle,' he explained.

To which Michael Winner replied recently, 'Show me a cow who can earn a million dollars a film.'

Whatever his real feelings about actors, Hitchcock often treated them very badly – particularly the women he worked with, whom he would sometimes bully into submission. During the making of *Rebecca* several people noted that Joan Fontaine, who was playing the role of the timid and unhappy new wife in strange surroundings, was excluded from the cliquey atmosphere of the production. She didn't get on with her co-stars or the other members of the English community in Hollywood, and they in turn didn't have much praise for her – though how this antipathy had started, no one was sure. It was only after the production had finished, and Miss Fontaine had turned in an excellent performance, that people began to wonder whether Hitchcock hadn't deliberately engineered the situation. Had he decided to make her feel in real life the isolation and doubt that she had to portray on screen?

There were occasions, however, when his dismissive behaviour was appropriate – and amusing. A young actress who found herself working with him for the first time was determined to earn his approval. Preening in a mirror and examining her profile, she asked him, 'Which do *you* think is my best side, Mr Hitchcock?'

'My dear,' he replied in a wonderful put-down, 'you're sitting on it.'

Unfortunately he was no good at coping with this kind of insult himself. Tippi Hedren once made the mistake of referring to his weight and found that the subject was taboo. He didn't speak to her for the remaining duration of the film.

He also had a strange line in practical jokes. During the

filming of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* he managed to handcuff the two stars, Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll, together. At first everyone accepted it as just a joke, but as time wore on and Hitchcock continued to insist that he'd lost the key, some of the amusement wore off. The two stars spent the entire day locked together – and Mr Hitchcock showed what some people thought was an unhealthy interest in knowing how they'd coped with the call of nature.

One of his favourite pastimes was appearing in his own films. He made 35 cameo appearances, some of them so brief that they are scarcely noticeable. In *Lifeboat*, for example, all the action was set on board a lifeboat drifting in the ocean. Because of this it was impossible for Hitchcock to make his usual appearance in the flesh – but he's there all the same. At one point a character in the boat picks up a newspaper. There on the back page, as he holds it up, an advert for a slimming product can clearly be seen. It shows two pictures, one taken before the treatment and one after. The 'before' picture is of Hitchcock himself.

It was while working on this film that he found himself in dispute with the studio's music department. They wanted to know what kind of music he required. Hitchcock sent word that he didn't want the film to have any music at all. The action was set in the middle of the ocean, he argued, and the audience would wonder where the sound of an orchestra was coming from. Their feathers ruffled, the musicians responded with the message, 'Just ask Mr Hitchcock where the camera comes from, and we'll tell him where the music comes from.'

On occasion Hitchcock was not averse to standing in for his actors. When it came to the famous shower scene in *Psycho*, it was he who dealt Janet Leigh the fatal blow. Anthony Perkins, who played the killer, wasn't on set at the time and so the director stepped in. There's no doubting the genius of that scene – in which, incidentally, one never sees any of the blows actually being struck. Instead there's just

the movement of the knife in the air, blood trickling with the water and some suitably scary music.

Many directors underrated the role that a film's editor had to play in the construction of such scenes, but Hitchcock was not one of them. He once gave an example of the difference that a good editor could make. 'Imagine James Stewart looking at a mother nursing a child. You see the child, then cut back to him. He smiles. Now Mr Stewart is a benign old gentleman. But take away that middle piece of film and substitute a girl in a bikini. Now he's a dirty old man.'

And while other directors were agonising over the best length for their films, he had a golden rule: 'The length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder.'

One last intriguing Hitchcock fact. Throughout his career he made only one film that had to be scrapped because halfway through the money ran out. The title of the film in question? *Number Thirteen*. Unlucky for Hitchcock fans.

Being a director in Hollywood could be a hard life, and the tougher you were, the better you could cope with the pressures. As Josef von Sternberg, 'creator' of Marlene Dietrich, once said, 'The only way to succeed is to make people hate you. That way they remember you.'

And on another occasion he revealed, 'In Hollywood, it doesn't really matter what they say about you. The only thing that matters is what you say about a guy's picture. You can seduce a man's wife here, attack his daughter and wipe your hands on his canary bird, but if you don't like his movie, you're dead.'

No one denied that John Huston was a great director, but many people found his wild way of living difficult to come to terms with. 'John,' said one, 'if you weren't the son of my beloved friend Walter, and if you weren't a brilliant writer and a magnificent director, you'd be nothing but a common drunk.'

In the middle of directing *The Lady from Shanghai* with Rita Hayworth, Orson Welles decided that the set needed a fresh coat of paint and instructed the production manager, a man named Fier, to have it done over the weekend. Fier refused because of the charges the painters' union would levy for overtime, so on the Saturday Welles and a group of his friends stole into the studio and painted the set themselves. Before they left, they put up a sign which read, 'THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FIER HIMSELF.'

When, on Monday morning, the studio scene painters saw what had happened they promptly went on strike. Fier had to pay them handsomely to compensate for the use of non-union labour, and he retaliated by deducting the cost from the fee which Welles was being paid to direct the film. Then he put up a sign of his own: 'ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELLES.'

In the days of the contract system, when actors were 'owned' by a single studio, arrangements could be made to loan a star to another studio for the making of a particular film. On one such occasion, Sam Goldwyn lent Ronald Colman to Warner Brothers. It was agreed that in the film's credits there should be a line reading, 'Ronald Colman appears by kind permission of Samuel Goldwyn.' This so

annoyed the director that he referred to it each time he gave Colman directions. 'You will now,' he'd instruct, 'cross to the window, open it and wave – by kind permission of Samuel Goldwyn.'

When *Star Wars* was being developed by 20th Century–Fox they wanted to change the name because, they argued, no film with the word 'star' or 'war' in its title had ever made a fortune. George Lucas, the film's director, held out for the original title – and *Star Wars* took more than $500 million worldwide.

The films of surrealist French film-maker Jean-Luc Godard have baffled many viewers who have tried to spot their meaning – and now we know why. At a conference held by European film-makers one person got up and stated, 'Movies should have a beginning, a middle and an end.'

Godard nodded in agreement. 'But not necessarily in that order,' he added.

John Simon had a harsher judgement: 'Since Godard's films have nothing to say, we could perhaps have ninety minutes of silence instead of each of them.'

It's not unusual for a director and his star to have a disagreement over the way a scene should be filmed. While making *The Big Country* with William Wyler, Gregory Peck asked to have a scene re-shot because he felt he had delivered his lines badly. Wyler said he was happy with the scene and refused to allow another take, and Peck walked

off the set in exasperation. The film was eventually finished, but Wyler and Peck refused to talk to each other. The feud continued for two years until 1960, when Peck was president of the Academy Awards and had to present Wyler with the Oscar for Best Film. 'Congratulations, you really deserve it,' said Peck.

'Thanks,' said Wyler, shaking hands. 'But I still won't re-shoot that scene.'

Herman J. Mankiewicz on Orson Welles: 'There but for the grace of God goes God.'

During the filming of *Bringing Up Baby*, Katharine Hepburn drove the director and crew crazy by chatting to people on the set all the time and holding up their work. One day Howard Hawks, the director, silenced her with a crushing remark about the size of her mouth. Miss Hepburn was not pleased, and she took him aside. It was her duty, she said, to warn him that she had lots of loyal friends on the set – and they would not put up with hearing him treat her like that. If he wasn't more careful about the way he behaved, he could find himself in a lot of trouble.

Howard Hawks raised his eyes in exasperation. Above them was a technician holding a heavy lamp. 'If you had the choice of dropping that on me or Miss Hepburn, which of us would you choose?' he asked.

The man didn't hesitate for a second. 'Stand back, Mr Hawks,' was all he said.

The 1946 film *Lady in the Lake* was the first movie in which the story was seen entirely through the 'eyes' of the hero. The audience only saw the star of the film when he looked in a mirror. It was an interesting experiment – and the audience hated it.

A single minute in Charlie Chaplin's film *City Lights* has made history as the scene which required the largest number of takes. In it, Chaplin, in his role as the little tramp, had to cross the street and buy a rose from a blind flower girl. In doing so he had to make her think, mistakenly, that he was rich. Chaplin simply couldn't work out the best way of doing this, and take after take was wasted as he tried to find some way of telling the story. Then he had an idea. He filled the street with cars to create a traffic jam. Then, with the cameras rolling, he attempted to cross the road. Unable to get round the cars, he opens the door of a big limousine that is blocking his path and climbs out the other side. The blind girl hears the sound of the door shutting and assumes that the man getting out is its owner. That simple, but brilliant, scene took 342 takes to achieve.

Writer and director Billy Wilder once went to Paris. His wife asked him to buy a bidet, then not easily available in the USA, and bring it back with him. He searched but because of wartime shortages couldn't find one, so he cabled back to his wife the message: Unable obtain bidet. Suggest handstand in shower.

'A team effort is a lot of people doing what I say.'

Michael Winner

Cecil B. De Mille was directing a western and had to shoot a scene in which a cowboy and his horse dropped at the sound of a gunshot. It was a very difficult and dangerous scene to do, and De Mille warned everyone on set that whatever happened – whether horse or rider was injured – they must keep out of the way for a few seconds and let the camera record it all. The shot rang out and with perfect timing the horse and rider fell heavily. Unfortunately the studio doctor, who was new to the way De Mille worked, forgot what he had been told and raced into shot with his first aid kit to help the cowboy.

De Mille was furious. Bellowing like a bull and shouting insults, he raced for the poor medic and chased him off the set. Next day the rushes were shown and they included the scene when the doctor had intervened. De Mille watched as an angry bald-headed man raced onto the scene. He was shocked. 'Who was that?' he asked.

'That was you, sir,' replied his aide.

De Mille was disbelieving. 'It may have looked like me, but I can tell you it's not,' he said icily. 'I never use language like that.'

During the première of *Heaven's Gate*, before the end of the film but after graphic scenes of violence, a woman left her seat and ran out of the cinema. 'This is the most disgusting, degrading and horrible film I've ever seen,' she told a man who was pacing up and down in the lobby outside. That man was Michael Cimino – the film's director.

When Orson Welles walked onto a Hollywood sound stage for the first time, his appreciative comment was, 'This is the biggest electric train set any boy ever had.'

Determined to make a real splash with their spectacular movie *Passion Play*, the makers hired L. J. Vincent, a well-known Broadway director, to direct the film. Vincent accepted the job and in so doing became the first person to be hired specifically as a film director. Unfortunately he didn't reveal to his employers that he had never seen a moving picture in his life. As far as he was concerned, a film was like some glorified slide show – a succession of tableaux, in which nothing moved, shown one after another. Despite attempts to convince him to the contrary he refused to believe that the new cameras could capture movement on film. Instead he would insist on making his actors go through scenes, then shout 'Hold it!' when he thought they'd make a suitably impressive tableau for the camera to capture.

It looked as if the whole project was going to be a disaster, when the cameraman had an idea. Each afternoon he would sadly announce that the light was too bad for filming to continue. The minute Vincent left the studio the cast and crew raced back to the sets and shot as many scenes as possible before it *did* become too dark to work. In this way the film was completed and became a great success. What Mr Vincent had to say when he saw it has not, sadly, been recorded.

Sam Peckinpah was famous for his slow-moving, gritty westerns. Howard Hawks, who liked things to be taken at a

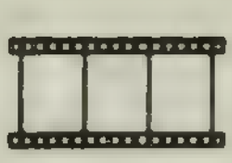
faster lick, once commented, 'I can kill five guys and have 'em buried in the time it takes him to kill one.'

During the filming of *Heaven's Gate*, which went down in movie history as one of the all-time disasters, executives from the Universal Artists studio flew out to the location in Montana to try and put a brake on the runaway costs director Michael Cimino was chalking up. Steven Bach, author of *Final Cut*, was one of the UA executives. In Montana he and his colleagues discovered that the main reason the production was shooting way over budget was that an area of barren land, intended as the scene of a battle, had been dug up and installed with an irrigation system to allow grass to be grown on it. The grass would actually be seen for only a few seconds in the film. Bach became suspicious about this. It seemed such a waste of money, and the only person to really benefit from the irrigation system would be the owner of the land – who hadn't been asked to pay a penny towards the expense. After some investigation they discovered the name of the man who owned the land. It was Michael Cimino.

'I am a typed director. If I made *Cinderella*, the audience would immediately be looking for a body in the coach.'

Alfred Hitchcock

WE CAN
GET OUR
INDIANS RIGHT
FROM THE
RESERVOIR . . .



Samuel Goldwyn was once explaining what a marvellous place Hollywood was for filming. 'The facilities are so good in Hollywood,' he said. 'For instance, you have that Indian scene. We can get our Indians right from the reservoir.'

Whatever people say about those great old producers they were guys with perception in the first place. They bought the best books, even though they may not have read them. Everyone in Hollywood passed on *Gone With the Wind* until David O. Selznick picked it up and made it into one of the most popular movies of all time.

In a way it's the success of Hollywood producers that has worked against the British industry. Anybody in Britain who has shown any great gift has been immediately snapped up by 'big brother' across the Atlantic. Having a common language has been both the benefit and the bane of the British industry; it's given actors, directors and writers work, but at the same time it's taken them away to Hollywood.

Not that everyone in the British industry finds it easy working in America. Some actors get stuck playing 'British' parts, though I've been lucky in that respect. American audiences don't think of me as being British. Maybe that's because I don't carry an umbrella everywhere and don't talk funny. I talk strange to them, but not funny. And that's been a great help with my work. It's let directors put me in a very New York milieu, as in *Hannah and Her Sisters*, without it bothering American audiences in the slightest.

Of all the great Hollywood producers, Sam Goldwyn is the one whose memory lives on most vividly. It's not so much because of the films he produced – though we owe classics such as *Wuthering Heights*, *The Best Years of Our Lives* and *Guys and Dolls* to him – but because of the wealth of anecdotes and tales he generated. Even his name was the source of an amusing story!

When he arrived in America he exchanged his unpronounceable Polish surname for something equally unlikely – Goldfish. Later he set up a company with Edgar Selwyn and after a brief period of trading as the Selfish Company, they combined their names to call it Goldwyn. Sam Goldfish liked the new name so much that he adopted it for his personal use. Unfortunately his right to do so was challenged and he had to go to court. After some consideration, the judge presiding over the case eventually decided in Goldwyn's favour, adding wryly, 'A self-made man may prefer a self-made name.'

Goldwyn's great strength as a producer was that he knew what ordinary people wanted to watch at the cinema. He had no pretensions to art or culture – and this sometimes led to problems with his creative staff. On one occasion a director had spent some time trying to explain a scene to him, only to find that he hadn't grasped the point of it. In exasperation he asked Goldwyn's teenage son, who was present, 'Do you understand it, Sammy?'

The boy agreed that it was perfectly clear to him. 'Since when are we making pictures for kids?' snarled his father.

Another time, one of the staff sent him a copy of an obscure book entitled *The Making of Yesterday: The Diaries of Raoul de Roussay de Sales, 1938–1942*. Goldwyn couldn't believe it. 'Will you believe that?' he asked. 'The kid's only four years old and he already keeps a diary!'

Perhaps his most endearing quality – at least it seems that way in retrospect – was his method of wording things to ensure they went his way. When *The Best Years of Our Lives* was released he told a Press gathering, 'I don't care if

it doesn't make a nickel. I just want every man, woman and child in America to see it.'

And, persuaded on another occasion to change his mind about a script, he insisted, 'I am willing to admit that I may not always be right, but I am never wrong.'

All too aware of this, his staff tended to play for safety and agree with him all the time. This infuriated him: 'I don't want yes-men around me,' he once complained. 'I want you to disagree with me once in a while – even if it costs you your job!'

Disagreeing with him *did* cost people their jobs. One of the directors who worked regularly for him advised against making the film *Nana*. Goldwyn went ahead anyway, and the movie was the predicted disaster. The director was never hired again because, according to Goldwyn, 'He was associated with one of my biggest flops.' Goldwyn was also justly famous for his wonderful verbal slips. In fact he was so famous for them that they've become known as Goldwynisms. Goldwyn himself denied that he'd uttered some of them, and it's true that many were invented. Here, real or invented, are some of the best:

Anyone who goes to see a psychiatrist should have his head examined.

Gentlemen, kindly include me out.

A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on.

Why only *twelve* disciples? Go out and get thousands!

In two words: im-possible.

If you can't give me your word of honour, will you give me your promise?

Who wants to go out and pay to see a bad movie when they can stay at home and see one free on TV?

We have all passed a lot of water since then.

All this criticism – it's like ducks off my back.

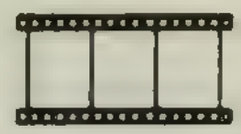
Directors are always biting the hand that lays the golden egg.

Tell me, how did you love the picture?

Let's bring it up to date with some snappy nineteenth-century dialogue.

Showing some guests his collection of paintings, he proudly announced, 'And this here's my Toujours-Lautrec.'

And finally, as he stood on the deck of a liner which was going to take him to Europe, he spotted some of his friends on the quay, waving him farewell. As the ship pulled away he yelled to them, *'Bon Voyage!'*

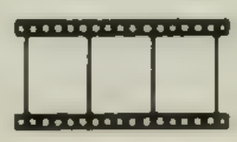


Albert Einstein, the Nobel prizewinning scientist, was being shown around the Warner Studios by one of the company heads when they met Jack Warner himself. 'This is the great Professor Einstein, the man who invented the Theory of Relativity,' said the executive.

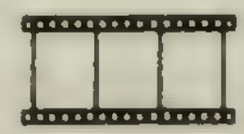
Mr Warner smiled. 'I've proved a theory of relatives too,' he said.

'Really?' asked Einstein, intrigued.

'Don't hire 'em.'

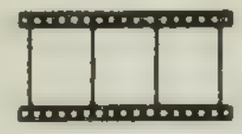


During World War II, J. Arthur Rank's Pinewood Studios were taken over and used as an outpost for the Royal Mint. According to his rivals, this was the only time the studio ever made any money.

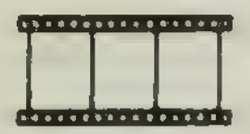


When Orson Welles found himself in financial trouble with a stage play he was producing, he called Harry Cohn, head of Columbia Studios, and asked for a $50,000 loan. Cohn wasn't eager to part with the cash – until Welles offered to direct a film for him. He'd found a book that would make a great film, he lied.

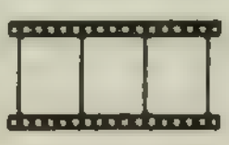
'What's the title?' asked Cohn. For a moment Welles was thrown. Then he looked round and saw one of his staff reading a paperback. Signalling to her to hold up the book so that he could see the title, he read it out to Cohn: *'If I Should Die Before I Wake.'* It was a good title, Cohn agreed. Welles promised that it would make a great low-budget thriller. It took just a few more minutes to tie up the loan – and then Welles was left with the problem of turning a book he hadn't read into a film. It eventually came out as *The Lady from Shanghai*.



Everyone's heard of D. W. Griffith, Hollywood's first major film producer-director, but not many people know that his initials stood for David Wark.

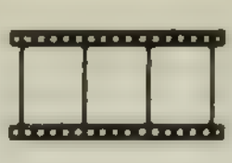


Howard Hughes hated the ridicule that fell on his 1956 Mongolian epic, starring John Wayne as *The Conqueror*. As well as losing a million or more dollars on the production, he spent another $12 million attempting to buy up all the existing copies of it so that no one would be able to see it. Hughes was one of the few people to actually enjoy the film and had it screened night after night. It was estimated that he watched it hundreds, if not thousands, of times.



'This atom bomb is dynamite!'

Sam Goldwyn



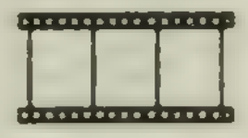
Harry Cohn, head of Columbia Pictures built a reputation as the man Hollywood loved to hate. At his funeral in 1958 huge crowds turned out. Hearing the news, actor Red Skelton observed: 'It proves what they always say – give the public what they want to see, and they'll show up for it.'

Cohn had no pretensions about producing art. 'Let Rembrandt make character studies, not Columbia,' he once said. And on another occasion he begged a screenwriter, 'Promise me you'll never make a picture where the characters walk out of the room backwards.'

Looking for something new to try, Jack Cohn, his brother, once suggested that Columbia make a biblical epic. 'What do you know about the Bible?' asked Harry. 'I'll bet you fifty dollars you can't even say the Lord's Prayer.' Jack hesitated for a few seconds, then began:

'Now I lay me down to sleep . . .'

Harry couldn't believe it. 'I'll be damned,' he said, reaching for his cash. 'I didn't know you knew it.'



These days it's not unusual for a movie to run late or over budget, but in the early days of Hollywood the slightest variation from schedule could mean trouble. When Sam Goldwyn found that a film which John Ford was directing was a day over schedule, he went to visit the set and asked Ford what he was going to do about it. Ford thought, then asked: 'How many pages of script do you think I should shoot a day?'

This threw Goldwyn, who had to think for a second. 'About five.'

Ford grabbed the script and ripped out five pages. 'Now we're back on schedule,' he said.

It's interesting to speculate how Sam Goldwyn would have coped with a disaster like *Heaven's Gate*, Michael Cimino's 1981 western epic made for the United Artists studio. In his book *Final Cut*, Steven Bach recounts the whole story behind the making of the movie. It's an astonishing tale of extravagance and mismanagement.

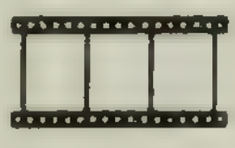
One of the chief problems was Cimino's search for perfection. Every day he shot around two hours' worth of film to cover just over half a page of script – or a minute and a half of screen time. For each day they worked, the team were falling almost a day behind schedule. And some of the escalating costs were due to the fact that Cimino wanted to keep the hundreds of crew members on call day or night, which rocketed their weekly salaries from around $1,000 to $5,000 a week! When Bach, who was head of production for United Artists, arrived on the set in Montana he discovered just one of the reasons the film was costing so much.

The battlefield, an area on which the most important sequences were to be filmed, was causing problems, the producer told him. What problems? The area had had to be cleared of rocks and debris, he explained, and an irrigation system installed. Bach was baffled. There had been no mention of an irrigation system in the original budget. What was it for? To grow grass, he revealed. Having chosen an arid plain on which to film, Cimino now wanted a grassy battlefield. Bach pointed out that for the battlefield sequences the screens would be full of horses and wagons. No one would see it. The producer pointed out that they would – for a few seconds in the opening shot.

And for the famous skating scene, 250 men, women and children were auditioned, taught to skate if they couldn't already, and each sent away with a cassette of the music that would be used in the film so that they could practise. When, several months later, Cimino was ready to shoot the scene they were brought back to the set and supplied with

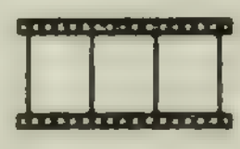
an individually designed costume based on old photographs of the period, every button and bow absolutely correct. All this just for the extras, many of whom were scarcely seen in the finished film.

The final cost of *Heaven's Gate*, originally budgeted at $7.5 million, was $36 million. And the farce didn't end there. Cimino's original version of the film ran for five and a half hours. United Artists cut it to just under three hours, but even that wasn't enough to save it. The film critic of the *New York Times* summed it up with the words, '*Heaven's Gate* is something quite rare in movies these days – an unqualified disaster.'



'For God's sake don't say yes until I've finished talking!'

Darryl Zanuck



Joseph L. Mankiewicz was discussing F. Scott Fitzgerald's screenplay for the film *The Three Comrades*, in which the female lead died. Mankiewicz thought it would be better if she lived. 'Think of *Camille*,' he told Fitzgerald. 'It would have made twice as much if Garbo had lived.'

'How about *Romeo and Juliet*,' responded Fitzgerald. 'You wouldn't have wanted Juliet to live, would you?'

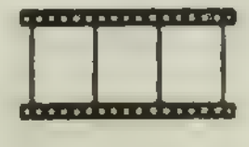
Like many Hollywood producers, Mankiewicz didn't have much experience of literature or the theatre; all he knew were movies – and he remembered that a 1936 film of *Romeo and Juliet* had lost money. 'That's just it,' he snapped. '*Romeo and Juliet* didn't make a cent.'

Sam Goldwyn had a problem with Shakespeare, too. Edward G. Robinson once went to him for advice. 'I've been offered the part of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*,' he told Goldwyn. 'Do you think I should take it?'

Goldwyn's advice was simple. 'Screw 'em – tell 'em you'll only play the merchant.'

Another famous story told about him (but not necessarily true) concerns Radclyffe Hall's book *The Well of Loneliness*, which tackled the controversial subject of lesbianism. The book had sold well and Goldwyn, who hadn't bothered reading it, told his staff to buy the film rights. 'You can't film that,' one of them warned. 'It's about lesbians.'

'No problem,' said Goldwyn. 'Where they got lesbians, we'll use Austrians.'



David O. Selznick, producer of *Gone With the Wind*, was famous for the lengthy memos he sent to everyone he worked with. When Alfred Hitchcock arrived to direct *Rebecca*, his first American film, Selznick sent him a memo. Twenty-five years later Hitchcock commented, 'I've just finished reading it. I think I may make it into a motion picture. I plan to call it *The Longest Story Ever Told*.'

In his excellent book *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, screenwriter William Goldman tells a number of stories that illustrate the hit-and-miss nature of the film world. He recounts one anecdote from the 1960s which occurred during a meeting with the head of a major film studio. Goldman had just seen a copy of the latest issue of *Life* magazine. It had on its cover a picture of a film star, whom it described as the biggest star in the world. When he met the studio head, who hadn't yet seen the magazine, Goldman asked him who he thought *Life* would have picked as the biggest star in the world.

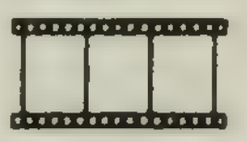
Without much hesitation he named Paul Newman.

Goldman shook his head. 'McQueen?' came the slightly more tentative suggestion. No. Perhaps it was Sidney Poitier? No again. Of course – it had to be John Wayne. It was not. Thinking of recent big successes, the film-man tried a different tack; what about Barbra Streisand or Julie Andrews? Still not right. Eventually Goldman put him out of his misery with the revelation that the biggest star in the world, according to *Life*, was Clint Eastwood. The studio boss thought about it for a bit. 'They're right,' he admitted.

As Goldman points out, if the man at the head of one of the biggest film studios can't work that kind of thing out, the whole movie world must be very much more complicated than it seems from the outside.

The Harry Cohn test of a film's quality: 'If my ass squirms, it's bad. If my ass doesn't squirm, it's good.' To which an aghast Herman Mankiewicz replied:

'Imagine the whole world wired to Harry Cohn's arse.'

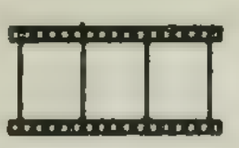


Jack Warner, one of the heads of Warner Brothers, was famed for his economy drives. He'd walk round the film lots switching off any unnecessary lights and ensuring that everyone was doing the job they'd been paid for. On one of these inspections he encountered the gateman who was in charge of checking the people entering the studio. The gateman happened to be singing a Verdi aria in an impressive voice. Jack stopped to chat and in conversation elicited the information that the man had had formal training and practised every day. Others might have been delighted to have such talent on their doorstep. Not so Jack.

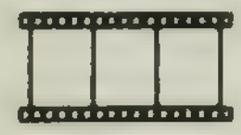
'Which would you prefer to be,' he asked, 'a singer or our gateman?'

Flattered by the attention of the great man, the gateman didn't hesitate before replying. 'A singer.'

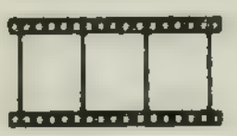
Warner's response was simple and to the point. 'You're fired.'



No one beat Sam Goldwyn when it came to business deals and he didn't like to be beaten in any other area of his life, either – particularly when it came to tennis. In his autobiography David Niven tells of one game when, playing singles with Goldwyn, he served the first ball of the match and delivered a perfect ace. 'Doubles,' announced Goldwyn, and marched over to the pair on the other court.



The 'B' in Cecil B. De Mille's name stands for Blount, but the 'O' in David O. Selznick's name didn't stand for anything at all. He adopted it because he thought it sounded better.



When Russian premier Nikita Khrushchev and his wife went to Hollywood they were given a star-studded welcome. Twentieth Century–Fox laid on a glittering lunch at which the president of the studio, Spyrous Skouras, made a speech celebrating the greatness of America – a country in which, he said, a poor Greek immigrant like himself could rise through hard work and enterprise to be president of a company like Twentieth Century–Fox.

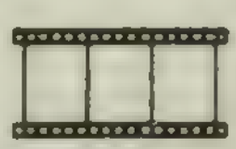
Mr Khrushchev was not impressed. In his reply he announced that despite Mr Skouras's praise of America, Russia was an even greater country. After all, in Russia a

poor peasant like himself could rise to be president of an even greater company – the USSR.

After this somewhat difficult start the Khrushchevs were taken on a tour of the studio. It did not seem to interest them in the way that had been hoped; instead they inspected the sets and scenes and film lots with an air of disapproval at this decadence. At last they were brought to the sound stage where the film *Can Can* was being shot. As a special treat for the Russian visitors Shirley MacLaine and her dancers went through their paces, energetically kicking their legs, displaying stocking tops and finishing by flashing their frilly black knicker-clad derrières. The Khrushchevs watched in growing horror and embarrassment, declared the display to be vulgar, and were hurried away before anything else could go wrong.

The RKO Studios were bought in 1948 by eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes. It was rumoured that shortly after acquiring them he was driven there late at night and shown round in the dark. After he had toured the place without saying a word, he indicated that it was time to go home. One studio employee couldn't resist asking, 'What do you have to say now you've seen it?'

'Paint it,' was Hughes's reply, and according to some people, that was the last time he ever went there.

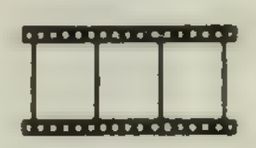


Many producers and directors are brilliant at the technical side of filming and making wonderful pictures, but very few of them know much about music. Sam Goldwyn once listened to a tape of a score and pronounced it superb. Then it was discovered that the tape had been playing backwards.

Another time, Darryl F. Zanuck sat watching a film set in

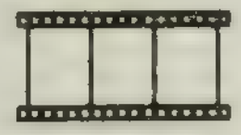
Paris. At the end, all he could criticise was the soundtrack. 'It's not French enough,' he commented. Then inspiration struck him.

'I know – let's put in more French horns!'

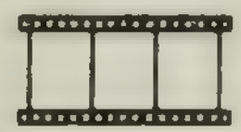


'I don't get ulcers. I give them!'

Harry Cohn



The most unusual screening of a movie must surely be the première of the Howard Hughes film *Underwater* which took place, yes, you guessed it, underwater. More than a hundred guests, each supplied with their own scuba-diving equipment, sat at the bottom of a lake in Florida and watched the film on a special screen. Sadly they weren't impressed. The soundtrack of the movie could not be heard underwater, and everyone quickly swam back to the surface.

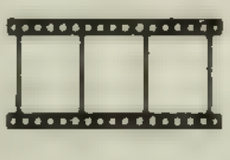


When it was announced that the next Marx Brothers movie was to be called *A Night in Casablanca*, Warner Brothers threatened to sue on the grounds that it was cashing in on their own *Casablanca*. Groucho Marx countered with a threat of his own: 'I'll sue you for using the word "Brothers".'

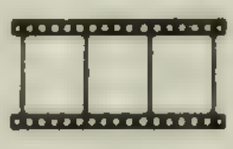
Although all the fuss died down, Groucho harboured a grudge against Warners for their petty behaviour. When he heard that they were about to produce a new film called *Night and Day* he wrote accusing them of stealing the title from two Marx Brothers films – *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*.

Howard Hawks, asked why so many of his films had such similar characters and stories, once said, 'When you find out a thing goes pretty well, you might as well do it again.'

Which might explain why there have been no fewer than 56 films made of *Carmen*, including seven different versions offered in a single year in 1984. Perhaps more surprisingly, *Hamlet* has been filmed 60 times – even though Shakespeare is supposed to be the kiss of death at the box office. But the most popular story is *Cinderella* which, at the last count, had been filmed 81 times – including everything from Walt Disney's cartoon to porn versions.

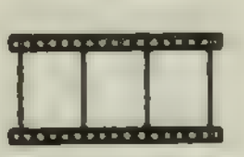


Rocky cost around $1,000,000 to make, but earned more than 100 times that amount during its worldwide release. In doing so it established Sylvester Stallone as one of the world's leading stars.



Those lucky enough to be invited to visit Douglas Fairbanks in his private suite at United Artists, which he had helped to found, came away greatly impressed by the scale of hospitality offered to them. Among the visitors was Ramsay MacDonald's son, who recalled that the main room of Fairbanks's quarters was dominated by a table measuring twenty feet in diameter. Standing on it were hundreds of bottles of alcohol of every type imaginable. For reaching those bottles at the far side of the table there was a special device for grabbing and lifting them into reach. As well as enjoying a drink, guests could also have a haircut or shave, courtesy of Fairbanks's barber, who worked from a miniature barbershop in an alcove. And as if that wasn't enough there was a private Turkish bath where,

sozzled, shaved and shampooed, guests could relax in the steam.



Gone With the Wind is now accepted as one of the greatest films of its era; possibly of all time. So it's surprising to discover that it was nearly never made. The first studio to be offered film rights was MGM, but Louis B. Mayer took the advice offered by one of his producers, 'Forget it. No Civil War movie ever made a nickel.'

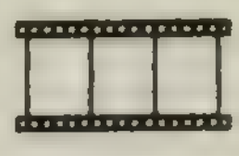
Next was 20th Century–Fox. Nunnally Johnson, a screenwriter at the studio, read the synopsis of the book and later remembered: 'Long ago at 20th Century–Fox I was reading one of the innumerable synopses that were distributed each week and I paused when I came to the name of the hero: Rhett Butler. Undiscouraged, I pressed on. But when I came to the name of the heroine, Scarlett O'Hara, I dropped the whole matter. What fools they were to think they could hoodwink me with rot like that!'

Warner Brothers were the next to reject it because they could not persuade their star, Bette Davis, to take the role of Scarlett. 'I bet it's a pip!' was her response after reading the script.

Eventually the rights ended up in the hands of David O. Selznick. He wanted Clark Gable, who was an MGM star, to play the part of Rhett Butler. MGM allowed him to have Gable on the understanding that they would release the film. But even then the movie seemed destined to sink. Not even the director, Victor Fleming, had confidence in it. Asked if he wanted to take a percentage of the profits as part of his fee, he replied: 'Don't be a damn fool, David. This picture is going to be one of the biggest white elephants of all time!'

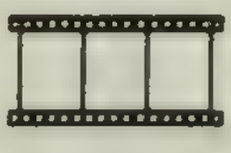
The rest, as they say, is history. Perhaps the greatest irony of them all is that MGM, who turned it down because

it wouldn't make a nickel, has over the years made millions of dollars from reissuing the film.



'Too caustic? To hell with the cost, we'll make the picture anyway.'

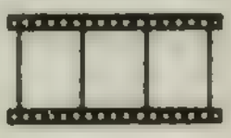
Sam Goldwyn



Louis B. Mayer liked to think of himself as the paternalistic head of his studio; he also hated to part with money, particularly when things weren't going well. One day a contract star, Robert Taylor, went to see him and asked for an increase in his salary. After all, he pointed out, he was doing bigger roles and his popularity was on the rise.

'My boy,' said Mayer, deeply sympathetic, 'you know, you're like a son to me. God never saw fit to give me the blessing of a son . . . but if he had, I would have wanted him to be exactly like you. We've such big plans for you – you can't begin to imagine what we have in store.' Then, on the verge of tears, he added. 'It hurts me deeply that you've come to me at a time like this to ask for money.'

Taylor found himself comforting his boss and apologising for causing him such anguish. When he emerged from the office someone asked if he'd got his increase. 'No,' he replied, 'but I just gained a father.'

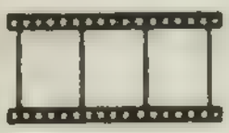


The only James Bond film ever to have lost money at the box office was *Casino Royale* in which David Niven played 007.

Jack Warner was well-known for his dislike of reading books, and when it was suggested that a book might be turned into a film he always relied on synopses of the work which were supplied by the script people at the studios. Then one day a director travelling across the Atlantic on board a cruise liner noticed that everyone aboard seemed to be reading, and talking about, a very thick book called *Anthony Adverse*. He read it himself, thought it had possibilities and, unable to send a synopsis from the ship, cabled Warner the message:

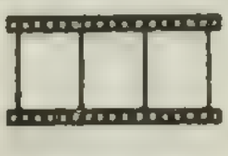
'Please read *Anthony Adverse*. Would make a great picture for us.'

Warner cabled back: 'Read it? I can't even lift it.'



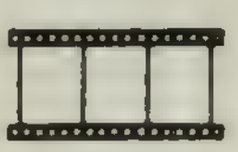
'The most important thing in acting is sincerity. Once you've learned to fake that, you're in!'

Sam Goldwyn



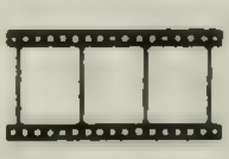
It's not really until a film is shown at a preview that the producer and director know whether they have a hit on their hands or not. After a preview of one film, Darryl F. Zanuck and his team were standing on the pavement outside the cinema discussing how they could edit the film to make it better. A man joined them and gave them his ideas. Thinking he was from the studio, they listened to what he had to say and were impressed. As he turned to go, Zanuck asked the man which department of the studio he worked in. None, said the stranger, explaining that he'd just been passing, had overheard the conversation and thought his opinions might be useful. And at that he walked off. Zanuck instructed one of his assistants to follow the guy and offer him a job on the spot.

David O. Selznick, producer of *Gone With the Wind*, was fined $5,000 for permitting Clark Gable to utter 'damn' in the line, 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.' Despite that, it was decided that for dramatic reasons the offending word could remain in the film.



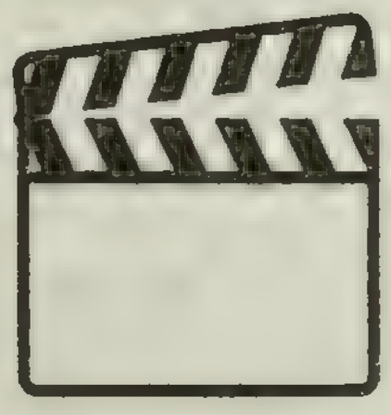
Sam Goldwyn had a terrible memory for names. He once hosted a dinner for Field Marshal Montgomery, who was visiting California, and proposed a toast to Marshal Field Montgomery – Marshall Field being a major American department store.

He had an even worse problem when it came to remembering the name of one of his PR staff, a Welshman called Euan Lloyd. Mr Lloyd became accustomed to being referred to as Urine. And actor Joel McCrea's name defeated him every time. To Sam Goldwyn he was always Joe MacRail. One day Mr McCrea corrected him. 'Look!' said Goldwyn. 'He's telling me how to pronounce his name, and I've got him under contract!'



Within six weeks of *Jaws* being shown on general release, one out of every eight people in the USA had seen it; a triumph for the amazing Steven Spielberg.

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD



I think scriptwriters are the most underestimated section of the movie industry. Without the script where are you? And yet, a lot of the time, the writers are treated like dirt.

I know a good many scriptwriters and I'm a great fan of writers in general. In fact, I think that if I hadn't been an actor, I'd have liked to have been a writer myself. So I'm one of the people who really thinks that a writer is probably the most important person on a movie, because everything starts with him or her. If you haven't got the words on the page – no matter how many big stars and how much money you've got, or how good your director and cameraman are – you haven't got anything.

I found working with Woody Allen interesting for just this reason, even though his writing is done long before the rest of us appear on the scene: it's a very private affair. Apparently he writes very quickly. Producers told me that he writes five or six scripts a year, but only makes two of them.

Reading has always been a passion of mine and I still read incessantly and very widely. I know that somewhere out there is a book I'm really going to want to make into a movie. It's just that, as yet, I haven't found it *before* it's been discovered by somebody else!

'Being in Hollywood is just like making love to a porcupine – it's a thousand pricks against one.'

Anonymous screenwriter

Writing for the screen is a creative sort of job and most writers like to work in their own surroundings and in their own time. When MGM decided that its writers weren't producing enough material they instructed them to come to the studio from nine to six each day and work in the cramped offices. William Faulkner, best-known for his novels, rebelled against this and demanded to be allowed to work at home. The studio didn't want to lose him, so they agreed. Two months later, after numerous attempts to get hold of him at his Hollywood apartment, they discovered that he really *had* gone home – to Mississippi.

Humorist and screenwriter Robert Benchley was at a Hollywood party where guests were invited to play a game in which they had to write their own epitaph. In the chair next to Benchley sat an actress famous for her numerous marriages and affairs. When she had trouble devising a suitable epitaph for her gravestone, Benchley helpfully offered a suggestion. 'At last she sleeps alone,' he said.

In his book *Tales From the Hollywood Raj*, which chronicles the lives and adventures of the British in Hollywood, Sheridan Morley tells the tale of writer George Grossmith who was pleasantly surprised to arrive in Hollywood and receive the news that his stage musical *The Dollar Princess*

was being turned into a film. Twentieth Century–Fox, who were producing it, asked him to help adapt the script. Grossmith accepted the offer and hid his surprise when they explained that they wanted to scrap the original story and inject something completely new – preferably something about the world of flying, which was all the rage at the time.

Grossmith went along with this and wrote a musical about a singing pilot. It had nothing to do with his original story and he had no idea why the picture was still to be called *The Dollar Princess*, but he wisely refrained from asking too many questions. He'd just completed the script when there was a terrible accident during the shooting of another film about pilots; the director and three cameramen were killed. Suddenly all films about flying were cancelled.

Grossmith was packing to go home to England when a message came from the studio asking him to rewrite *The Dollar Princess* with a plot centred on life in the Foreign Legion. And this time, they said, there was no need for songs – musicals were losing their popularity. He unpacked his bags and started all over again. This time Fox weren't entirely happy with the script, so they sent it to another writer. It was revamped in this way several times, and eventually hit the screens – as a non-musical drama set in Casablanca and titled *Women Everywhere.*

They do things differently these days, as Steven Bach recounts in his book *Final Cut*. Bach was one of the heads of the United Artists studio in the late 1970s when a book called *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, which investigated contemporary American sexual behaviour, was put on the market. Somehow Bach managed to get an illicit photocopy of the book, which had not yet been published, and he and his fellow executives saw in it four potential plots for films.

Desperate to buy the property, they began to negotiate for it, bidding at first $1,000,000, then $1,500,000 and finally $2,500,000 – the price for which they obtained it. At the time they considered themselves lucky to buy the book for that price; later it was revealed that no one else had been in the market for it (other film companies thought the material was too sexually explicit to be handled). Not only that, but nine years later not a single film has been made from the book.

The first film in which the word 'bugger' was used was *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

During the heyday of Hollywood, when some studios were turning out a film a week or more, there was a tremendous call for new material. For this reason everyone was constantly on the look-out for books that could be turned into movies. On occasion this led to some very amusing requests. One studio executive tried to set up a meeting with Robert Louis Stevenson before someone informed him that Stevenson was dead. And another executive wrote to English author William Thackeray (1811–1863) to tell him that one of his books contained the elements of a good film. The publisher who intercepted this letter was so amused by it that he wrote back to the film studio and asked if they'd be interested in reading a thriller called *Vanity Fair* that Thackeray had just finished.

William Peter Blatty, author of *The Exorcist* and producer

of the film version of his book, had at the last count made more than $90 million from his story.

A 1964 Russian film of *Hamlet* was supplied with sub-titles for the English-speaking market. As the film was a direct representation of the play, it would have been an obvious move to add Shakespeare's own lines – but no. The person who wrote the sub-titles took Boris Pasternak's Russian translation of the play and then carefully turned it back into English – with some surprisingly non-Shakespearian turns of phrase.

The casting of W. C. Fields as Mr Micawber in the 1935 version of David Copperfield was an inspired move. Unfortunately as the date for filming came closer and closer, Fields began to get nervous about whether he could actually tackle the role – he was essentially a stand-up comedian and serious drama was new to him. Perhaps, he suggested, he could insert one of his famous juggling routines into the film? The writers politely explained that in his novel Dickens hadn't mentioned anything about Micawber being a juggler. Disappointed, Fields sighed, 'He probably forgot!'

Gone With the Wind was originally scheduled to be called *Tomorrow is Another Day*, and Scarlett O'Hara was to be replaced by Pansy O'Hara. Even the Tara plantation was to be rechristened Fontenoy Hall.

In every poll about the greatest movies of all time *Citizen Kane* always comes out at, or near, the top. The story was based on the life of William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper tycoon who built a great gothic-style castle on his estate at San Simeon, surrounded it with exotic wild animals and lived there in splendour with his mistress, actress Marion Davies. Life there was governed by extraordinary rules. Although Hearst and Miss Davies were living together outside marriage, one of these rules was that there should be no sexual relationships between any guests unless they were married couples. At least one visitor, the writer and wit Dorothy Parker, broke that rule. The morning after, she received a note from Hearst requesting her to leave. As she departed she paused just long enough to write in the visitors' book:

> Upon my honour,
> I saw a Madonna
> Standing in a niche,
> Above the door
> Of the famous whore
> Of a prominent son of a bitch.

Other visitors were less than impressed with the architecture and taste of the place. In the great baronial dining hall, hung with ancient flags and banners, was a long refectory-style table at which everyone ate. The grand style was somewhat spoiled by shiny metal holders which dispensed cheap paper napkins and bottles of ketchup and sauce stationed every few feet down the table. It was this kind of *folie de grandeur* that provoked Orson Welles into making *Citizen Kane*.

Anyone who has seen the film will remember that at the end Charles Kane, played by Welles, dies with the word 'Rosebud' on his lips. In the film 'Rosebud' is the name painted on the side of a child's sledge, which is seen being burned. But according to Kenneth Anger in his book *Hollywood Babylon II*, there was a scathing double meaning behind 'Rosebud'.

Marion Davies once revealed to a female friend that her lover had christened a particularly intimate part of her anatomy 'Rosebud'. Word got around, and the fact came to the attention of Herman J. Mankiewicz who wrote *Citizen Kane*. He included it as a final taunt at Hearst – who was naturally furious but, rather than create a storm and reveal his sexual secrets to the world, did not block the showing of the film.

Years later the Hearst family were still smarting from the *Citizen Kane* attack. Hearst's granddaughter Patty was kidnapped by a group calling themselves the Simbianese Liberation Army. After some time in captivity she turned to the group's cause and became a member, joining them in the criminal activities for which they were sought by the police. One day the members of the SLA sat around wondering what to do. Someone suggested that they go to see *Citizen Kane*, which was on at a nearby cinema. Miss Hearst refused, saying that she'd never be able to live it down if the police caught up with her and arrested her while she was watching *that* film.

It may surprise you to know that an average film script is only 115–130 pages in length. The scriptwriter's rule of thumb is that for each minute of film he, or she, needs to supply one page of script.

Sir Winston Churchill worked as a scriptwriter for London Films for five years from 1934. His best-known work was on the script for *Conquest of the Air*. He was not the only statesman to be involved in the screenwriting business. President Roosevelt came up with the plot for a 1936 film

entitled *The President's Mystery*, about a lawyer who fakes his own death.

Everyone knows that Humphrey Bogart said, 'Play it again, Sam,' in *Casablanca* – but in fact he didn't. What he actually said was, 'You played it for her, you can play it for me. If she can stand it, I can – play it.'

When MGM decided to make a movie about the life and death of the Russian monk Rasputin, their writers were careful to change the names of any people who were still alive. For Prince Yusupov, who had been involved in Rasputin's murder, they substituted the fictional Prince Chegodieff, thus hoping to avoid any legal tangles. Unfortunately it didn't work. The real Prince Yusupov was proud of his involvement in Rasputin's death and sued MGM for denying him the credit for it. Meanwhile a real Russian nobleman called Prince Chegodieff sued them for libel! MGM were forced to pay two lots of compensation.

The film world is full of tales of temperamental stars who hold up filming on whims. Marilyn Monroe was one of the worst offenders. She had a habit of turning up hours late at the studio and claiming she'd got lost on the way there – this despite the fact that she'd made the journey on countless other occasions. Other stars would insist on being photographed only from a certain angle, while heavy drinkers were sometimes hung over in the morning and drunk after lunch, giving the studios only a few precious hours' filming

each day. In 1947, after Errol Flynn's boozing had got out of control and caused delays, Jack Warner wrote a set of guidelines banning alcohol from the set of his films and threatening to sue him for damages if he held up shooting. 'We will never again make pictures where Flynn or any other artist becomes incoherent due to liquor or whatever it may be,' he thundered.

Actors these days are generally better disciplined – but there are still occasions when a display of temperament holds things up. In *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, his personal view of Hollywood, William Goldman tells of an incident that occurred during the filming of *Marathon Man*, which he'd written. The film's star was Dustin Hoffman, who's renowned for the intensity he brings to his roles. In this film there was a scene in which his character is woken by someone entering his flat late at night. Hoffman was required to spring awake, grab a torch from the table by his bed and challenge the intruder. The rehearsal seemed fine, but soon a dispute arose over the torch. Hoffman insisted that his character would not sleep with one on the bedside table. John Schlesinger, directing the film, pointed out that Hoffman's character had only recently been mugged in the film; keeping a torch by the bed was a sensible precaution. Anyway, having a torch beam flashing through the darkened room was a great visual effect that would be lost if the character just turned on the light. And it helped the plot, which was why Goldman had written it in. Hoffman was unmoved; a torch wasn't consistent with the character. An hour later they were still arguing about this minor point.

As he watched, Goldman began to form his own opinion of why Hoffman was objecting so vociferously. He suspected that, in Hoffman's opinion, anyone keeping a torch by the bed was lacking in bravery – afraid of the dark, perhaps – and he didn't want his fans to think he'd become a coward.

For the plot of *The Lavender Hill Mob*, made by Ealing Studios, the screenwriter had to work out a way in which his villain, played by Alec Guinness, could rob the Bank of England. He decided to take the problem to the Bank itself and the governors willingly set up a committee to work out the details of how to get into the vaults. It was never made clear whether they then took precautions to ensure that no one copied the method used in the film!

In the movie *Hold the Front Page* the writer, the director and the star, Adolphe Menjou, felt it was important to include the line, 'The son of a bitch . . .' in one of Menjou's speeches. This was difficult, because the Hays Office censored bad language and were bound to be offended by the words. In the end the director had a brilliant idea. The line was uttered in a scene in a newspaper office, and the place was full of people using typewriters. In those days when a typewriter reached the end of a line it gave a loud 'ding'. So after much trial and error they finally managed to record the scene so that at the moment Menjou said the unacceptable word it was drowned out by the ding of a typewriter bell. There was nothing the censor could do about it.

If you've seen a western recently, you'll probably have noticed how few words the stars actually say. Most cowboy films are full of fights, action shots and stunning panoramas of the Wild West, and most western stars are happy to make do with a grunt where other actors might prefer a line of dialogue. This was brought home to James Stewart when he was invited to play a role in a radio version of one of the westerns he'd starred in. He went along to rehearsal at the radio station only to find the producer frantic with worry.

'We can't do it,' he cried. 'It's impossible – no one says anything!'

Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws* and *The Deep*, likes to make cameo appearances in the films that are made of his books. In *Jaws* he played a newspaper reporter.

Writing for the screen can be a thankless task. Take the case of the screenwriter who received his script back from Cecil B. De Mille with these words written on it: 'What I have crossed out I didn't like. What I haven't crossed out I am dissatisfied with.'

De Mille was most famous for his huge religious extravaganzas and he had terrific confidence in the Bible: 'Give me any couple of pages of the Bible and I'll give you a picture.' Despite his enthusiasm for it, De Mille was not an expert on the Good Book and got his history so muddled that someone wrote this clerihew about him:

Cecil B. De Mille
Much against his will
Was persuaded to keep Moses
Out of the Wars of the Roses

John Mortimer, barrister, playwright and one-time screenwriter, once found himself queuing for lunch in the canteen at Pinewood Studios. The place was full of nuns – extras appearing in the film about convent life, *Black Narcissus*. As the very attractive young nun in front of him waited for

her bacon and beans she turned to him and whispered, 'It's being a virgin that makes you so bloody hungry!'

Of all the comic geniuses who went to Hollywood, Charlie Chaplin was the greatest. Why was he so much better than the others? This story goes some way to explaining his talent. Charles MacArthur, a playwright, had been invited to Hollywood to write a screenplay – but he was finding the comic scenes difficult.

His problem, he explained to Chaplin, was that all the classic comic gags had been exhausted. How on earth was he going to get a laugh by showing a fat lady slip on a banana skin when it had been done a million times before? What was he supposed to do? Should he show the banana skin first, then the fat lady bearing down on it? Or the fat lady first, and then the banana skin, and then her fall?

Chaplin put him right. 'Neither,' he said. 'First, show the fat lady approaching. Then show the banana skin. Then show the fat lady carefully stepping over the banana skin – and falling down an open manhole.'

No fewer than 31 writers are on record as having contributed to the screenplay of the 1943 picture *A Yank at Oxford*. Eight of them received a credit and among those whose work went unacknowledged were Herman J. Mankiewicz and the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald.

James Joyce, author of *Ulysses*, was the manager of the first cinema to open in Ireland.

Howard Hawks thought he'd come up with an unbeatable combination when he decided to combine modern-day gangsters and the story of the Borgias, the sixteenth-century Italian family of poisoners, Popes and incestuous siblings, to make the ultimate mob thriller. The underworld thought it sounded a great idea too. Even Al Capone, on whom the main character was based, acknowledged that he was flattered by the attention. And so it was that as Mr Hawks and his writers sat in their office trying to piece together a plot, a succession of shady characters came to call – each bringing their personal account of brutal gang-land crimes. Some of the mobsters even acted as special advisers on the movie, explaining how a particular murder had been carried out and ensuring that the detail of mob clothing, etiquette and slang was correct in every way.

Witty Dorothy Parker was lured away from New York to go and work in Hollywood as a scriptwriter. Feeling lonely and neglected after her first few weeks at the studio, when no one came to visit her in her office, she solved the problem by removing her own name from the door and replacing it with a sign reading MEN. Another time she went away on honeymoon without delivering a script she had promised. When the studio contacted her to find out why it hadn't arrived, she replied, 'Because I've been too fucking busy – and vice versa.'

The only film ever to have been made with Latin dialogue was Derek Jarman's homosexual film *Sebastiane* in 1976.

When Sam Goldwyn decided to do a film version of *Wuthering Heights* he commissioned two writers to produce the screenplay. It so happened that the book was a great favourite of critic and writer Alexander Woollcott and that Woollcott was also a friend of both the writers. He invited them to go and work on his peaceful private island in Lake Champlain, with the intention of keeping an eye on the script and ensuring that it was faithful to Emily Brontë's novel.

The writers accepted the invitation, guessing that this was the purpose behind it. Knowing that Woollcott would try to sneak an inspection of their script, they decided to play a joke on him and left some pages of it lying around. These pages dealt with the period in Heathcliff's life in which he goes away and makes his fortune – a period which Emily Brontë leaves blank. In their version, the two writers had Heathcliff going to America, becoming a cowboy and getting involved in shoot-outs and scrapes. Woollcott couldn't believe his eyes when he read it. 'You have raped Emily Brontë!' he accused them.

The word 'Mafia' is never mentioned in the film *The Godfather* because of pressure from the Italian-American League.

Basing a screen character on a living person can often lead to trouble, but when boxer Muhammad Ali was invited to a viewing of *Rocky II*, which featured a character who had evidently been modelled on him, he was impressed. 'I'm the Master of Disaster,' boasted the screen boxer.

'The Master of Disaster,' said Ali enviously. 'I wish I'd thought of that!'

Charles Dickens would probably have been greatly amused to know that when the 1946 film of *Nicholas Nickleby* was shown in China its title was changed to *Hell On Earth*. Other Chinese changes included *The Prince's Revenge* for *Hamlet* and *Lost Child in Foggy City* for *Oliver Twist*.

Just a few years later *Guys and Dolls* was translated into German as *Heavy Youths and Light Girls*. And when *Grease* appeared in Spain and Venezuela it was billed as *Brillantina* and *Vaselina* respectively because in Spanish the literal translation of 'grease' means 'fat' – and who would go to see a film called *Fat*? But then who would go to see a film called *Vaseline*!

Working with the Marx Brothers could be hell, as screenwriter Herman J. Mankiewicz discovered. 'I never knew what a bicarbonate of soda was until I wrote a Marx Brothers picture,' he said.

When actor John Gilbert suggested to Louis B. Mayer that John Masefield's poem *The Widow in the Bye Street* would make a good basis for a film, Mayer turned the idea down flat. Unwilling to give up on the project, Gilbert arranged for the screenplay to be written and renamed *Man, Woman and Sin*. Mayer snapped it up, with not the slightest idea that it was the story he'd earlier rejected.

During the 1930s there was a rule that anyone who committed a crime or a morally bad act in a film had to be seen to be punished for their wickedness. This created problems

for screenwriters, who had to turn their dramas into morality tales. One film which was affected by this ruling had a storyline in which a husband whose wife has committed adultery forgives her and accepts her back. When he saw it, the censor was adamant that this could not be allowed. The woman would have to be punished for her sin by losing her husband's love.

He was swayed, however, when he met Charles Laughton, who starred as the husband. Laughton started by arguing that the film was about forgiveness. If the husband couldn't forgive the wife, there was no point in them making the movie. The censor was unmoved. Then Laughton changed his tack.

'Does this mean that you don't believe in the New Testament?' he asked. 'After all, Christ forgave the woman who committed adultery, didn't he?'

There was an embarrassed silence. Then the censor admitted that Laughton had a good point, and the scene of forgiveness was allowed.

Have you ever wondered where Tarzan's catchphrase, 'Me Tarzan!' came from? It's said to date back to the time Johnny Weissmuller was asked to do a screen test for the role of Edgar Rice Burroughs' jungle hero. 'Me? Tarzan?' he asked in surprise – and it soon became 'Me Tarzan' for real.

Spencer Tracy, asked what he looked for in a film script, replied without hesitation, 'Days off.'

The script department at Columbia Pictures was hard at work preparing a screenplay of a story set in Biblical times when Harry Cohn came storming into their meeting. 'I may not be a college man,' he fumed, throwing the script down in front of them, 'but I know damn well that people in Biblical times did not go around saying "yes, siree" and "no, siree". So what is it doing in the script?'

The writer was amazed. 'Where does it say that?' he asked.

Cohn flipped open the script and pointed to one of the lines. The writer read what had been typed there: 'Yes, sire.'

'No problem, we'll sort it out,' he promised.

When writer Nunnally Johnson was asked how he was going to adapt to writing for the big screen he responded, referring to his typewriter: 'Very simple. I'll just put the paper in sideways.'

LOOKS DEPARTMENT

When it comes to costume and make-up, I don't think anything in my career beats having to wear complete drag in *Dressed to Kill*, in which I played a transvestite psychopath. I had a woman as my double in that movie and we looked so similar in dark glasses that no one could tell the difference between us until the electrician said, 'The one on the left is Michael. I can see the hairs coming through his stockings.' I had to shave my legs after that. It was awful!

I remember once, years ago, when I was working as a kid at Pinewood I watched the shooting of a huge crowd scene in *A Tale of Two Cities*. There were hundreds of extras taking part in this, all dressed in French Revolutionary costume, and the director told them to toss their hats into the air when they saw the victim's head lopped off by the guillotine. Shooting started. Off came the head and hundreds of eighteenth-century caps and hats sailed upwards taking with them hundreds of eighteenth-century wigs and leaving a sea of very 1950s haircuts exposed to view . . . it's no joke working in period costume!

It's very often the things that are wrong with an actor that make him a star. Take Clint Eastwood. In a 1983 interview with the *National Enquirer* he told of the difficulties of getting film work. 'It was the same old story. My voice was too soft; my teeth needed capping; I squinted too much. I was too tall. And I know that if I walked into a casting office right now and nobody knew I was Clint Eastwood, I would get the same old treatment. Everything they said was wrong is still here.'

When a cameraman was asked to make a screen test of Sophia Loren in 1951 his response was: 'She is quite impossible to photograph, too tall, too big-boned, too heavy all round. The face is too short, the mouth is too wide, the nose is too long. What do you want of me – miracles?'

Clark Gable fared no better. After seeing his screen test Jack Warner told him, 'You're just a big ape.'

Even Cary Grant, the most elegant, amusing and sophisticated of all stars, was told after his test: 'You're bow-legged and your neck is far too thick.'

According to the record books, the biggest chest to have been displayed in a Hollywood movie belonged to the appropriately named Chesty Morgan. She bared all 73 inches of her bosom in a 1975 film called *Deadly Weapons*.

When billionaire businessman Howard Hughes first saw photographs of Jane Russell, a chiropodist's assistant from Minnesota, he declared, 'Today I saw the most beautiful pair of knockers I've ever seen in my life!' After that there was no attempt to be subtle about Miss Russell's appeal. Complaining that, 'We're not getting enough production

value out of Jane's breasts,' Hughes went to work and created an aerodynamically-designed bra that would show off her bosom to best advantage.

Marlene Dietrich had some of her back teeth removed to give her that famous sunken-cheeked look.

In 1934 the Kansas Restaurant Association organised a special thank-you for film star Mae West. What had she done for them? Her curvaceous but rounded figure had, for a short time at least, brought an end to the craze for dieting that had been started by the slim silhouettes of actresses like Marlene Dietrich and Joan Crawford. Kansas rest-aurateurs were grateful for the improvement in their business.

John Huston's 1966 film *The Bible* portrayed Adam with a navel – which caused some comment because technically speaking he wouldn't have had one. Indeed, in earlier films Adam had been shown anatomically correctly, without one.

Sam Goldwyn once persuaded David Niven to have his hair bleached white to play a role, rather than wear a wig. When filming was completed an attempt was made to dye his mane back to its usual colour. It was a disaster – after

initially turning jet black, it bleached to what Niven described as 'metallic magenta' in the sun and sea. Even worse was to come. When the film came out the *Los Angeles Examiner* said, '. . . a pity Goldwyn allowed Niven to ruin his performance by wearing an appalling wig.'

'I have eyes like a bullfrog, a neck like an ostrich and limp hair. You have to be good to survive with that equipment.'

Bette Davis

Judy Garland had a charming snub nose, but in an effort to make it look more elegant she wore a rubber nose bridge.

Katharine Hepburn hated dirty hair – on herself and everyone else. One Hollywood chronicler claimed that she went round sniffing her co-stars' locks to see if they had been freshly washed. And in the middle of the jungle while filming *The African Queen*, Miss Hepburn insisted on washing her hair in a bucket at the end of each day's filming.

Next time *Cleopatra* is shown on television, look out for the small scar on Elizabeth Taylor's neck. It was caused by an emergency tracheotomy that had to be performed when she caught pneumonia while making the movie.

Actress Marion Davies, long-time mistress of newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, had probably the most extravagant dressing-room of all time – a fourteen-room Spanish-style bungalow which she insisted on having transported from studio to studio as her contract changed.

Veronica Lake, famous for her long blonde locks, was asked to trim her hair during the war because munitions workers were copying her peek-a-boo curls and getting their hair caught in machinery.

For many actresses one of the main challenges in life is keeping slim and svelte for the screen. Some triumph, like Faye Dunaway who eats just one meal a day to maintain her figure, and Raquel Welch and Jane Fonda who spend hours each day exercising; others, like Elizabeth Taylor, lose the battle occasionally.

Judy Garland was another actress who had a weight problem throughout her life. As the teenage star of *The Wizard of Oz*, in which she had to play a character several years younger than her own age, she was given amphetamines to burn off her puppy fat. They helped, but they started her on a lifetime of drug abuse that ended with her suicide, by pills, in 1969. The constant attention of the Press hadn't helped things. When she arrived in London to give some concerts in the 1960s, several newspapers were quick to point out that there was more of Judy than they'd seen before. At a press conference she noticed one photographer kneeling on the floor at her feet. 'What are you doing down there?' she asked.

'Waiting to get a picture of your double chin,' he replied ungallantly. No wonder the poor woman was so troubled.

Less bothered by matters of *avoirdupois* was Ethel Greer, who tipped the scales at more than 45 stone at the time she made a film called *Hoopla* with Clara Bow in 1933. For some scenes the sets and furnishings had to be specially strengthened to cope. There's a story that Miss Greer's husband, who weighed in at a mere 10 stone, came to watch the filming one day and was introduced to Clara Bow. He was unimpressed by Miss Bow's neat figure. 'I never could see why some fellows go for these skinny girls,' he commented.

Paul Newman is very sensitive on the subject of his famous blue eyes – so much so that he once revealed, 'I have often thought that my tombstone might well read: "Here lies Paul Newman, who died a failure because his eyes suddenly turned brown."'

Some actresses have been honest enough to admit that it has been their looks, rather than talent, that has got them to the top. Take Brigitte Bardot: 'I started out as a lousy actress and have remained one.'

And Raquel Welch: 'I can't say the mini made me an actress, but it sure did help to make me a star.' Others were less charitable and even went so far as to deny that Miss Welch's natural assets were . . . well, natural. Make-up artist George Masters once revealed:

'She's silicone from the knees up.' If that's true, she's also a triumphant display of the surgeon's skill.

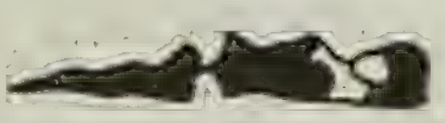
Miss Welch herself acknowledged the agonies of maintaining the body beautiful. 'Sometimes I just get tired of the whole slimming thing and want to tuck in,' she revealed. 'I've often eaten an entire chocolate cake washed down with a bottle of milk.'

It was Sam Goldwyn who spotted Danny Kaye's talents and signed him up for stardom, but when he first met Kaye he was disappointed by his appearance. No one could actually bring themselves to put it directly, but he looked very Jewish. Then Goldwyn had a brilliant idea. They'd dye his hair red-blond. The result was a great success and the new star was every bit as successful as they had hoped.

Claudette Colbert firmly believed that the left side of her face was the best, and she refused to allow her right profile to be filmed. This sometimes required whole scenes to be rearranged around her, and cameramen who worked with her used to call her right side 'the other side of the moon' – because no one ever saw it.

'When you're twenty and pretty, then you're rather like Switzerland – beautiful but dull.'

Faye Dunaway



One evening Joan Crawford appeared at a party with a diamond stuck dramatically on her forehead. The other guests admired it and assumed it was some new fashion trend. Finally one person asked about the new fad. Miss Crawford laughed and explained that it was nothing like that; her eyes were looking tired after a long day's work, but with the diamond on her forehead nobody noticed the shadows.

Walt Disney modelled many of his cartoon creations on living people. Marilyn Monroe's vital statistics were borrowed for the Tinkerbell in *Peter Pan*. An actress called Marge Champion was the model for Snow White. And in *Fantasia* Bela Lugosi's features were used as the visual reference for the Black God.

'Everything you see I owe to spaghetti.'

Sophia Loren

Sam Goldwyn had a great idea to change Lana Turner's looks for *The Adventures of Marco Polo* – he'd have her eyebrows shaved off. This was done, but unfortunately they never grew back properly again, and Miss Turner remained eyebrowless for the rest of her career.

After her appearance in her first film *To Have and Have Not*, Lauren Bacall was nicknamed 'The Look' for the way she had gazed at Humphrey Bogart. As Miss Bacall later revealed, 'the look' was not entirely intentional: 'I used to tremble from nerves so badly that the only way I could hold my head steady was to lower my chin practically to my chest and look up at Bogie. That was the beginning of The Look.'

James Stewart has collected every hat he has ever worn in a

film. He's also very attached to a single pair of shoes which he wore in more than twenty of his movies.

Max Factor was the first person to produce make-up specially for films. His Supreme Greasepaint, which went on sale in 1914, was thick enough to cover warts, moles, freckles and rosy cheeks, which all photographed black or grey in the early days of movie-making. To get the best effect under lights, performers were sometimes required to paint their faces strange colours – usually bright yellow.

'The relationship between the make-up man and the film actor is that of accomplice in crime.'

Marlene Dietrich

'I think that the most important thing a woman can have, next to talent, is her hairdresser.'

Joan Crawford

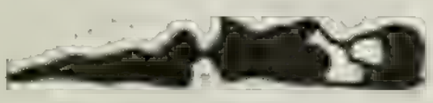
Dark glasses have become something of a cliché for film stars today, but when they were originally developed they had a practical purpose. They were used to protect the actors' eyes from the intense lighting that had to be used in the eariy days of film. For close-ups huge batteries of lamps were aimed directly at the stars' faces. Several people

suffered damage to their eyes – including Jean Harlow, who almost lost her sight.

Rita Hayworth had made 24 films without much acclaim when she decided she needed a change of image. The change was fairly drastic. She had electrolysis to push her hairline further back, dyed her locks copper red – and shot, almost immediately, to fame.

When Howard Hughes was called to watch Clark Gable auditioning for a film role he dismissed him with the words, 'His ears make him look like a taxi-cab with both doors open.'

Gable was painfully aware of this drawback, and for a long time allowed the make-up artists to tape his ears back. Then one day he was filming a scene with Greta Garbo when the tape snapped and an ear flapped loose. No one noticed – and that was the end of the tape.



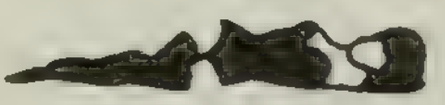
'Marilyn Monroe was all woman. She had curves in places other women don't even have places.'

Cybill Shepherd

In Hollywood looks count for a lot and plastic surgery is taken pretty much for granted – which is why one of Barbra

Streisand's critics commented that most girls who looked like Streisand were trying to have something done about it. But Miss Streisand knows that looks aren't everything. 'There's no way I'm going to risk having my real beauty – my voice – changed by a nose operation. If that happened, I'd be just another pretty face.'

Despite the glamour of many of her roles, Greta Garbo liked simple comfort. When she went walking she would wear huge, heavy walking boots – which led to a rumour that she had huge feet. And underneath the wonderful dresses and costumes she wore during *Camille*, she opted for comfort rather than elegance. According to her co-star, Robert Taylor, she slopped around in old bedroom slippers!



Australian swimming champion Annette Kellerman was the first person to appear on the public screen in the nude. Hedy Lamarr was the first female star to take part in a film depiction of sexual intercourse.

When it came to making the costumes for *Gone With the Wind*, designer Walter Plunkett stuck closely to the descriptions of Scarlett O'Hara's dresses in the original novel. They hadn't been filming long, however, when he began to realise that the author, Margaret Mitchell, had dressed her heroine almost entirely in green. The first part of the film had already been shot, but fortunately there was a problem with the colour-processing of one scene and it

had to be filmed again. Grasping the opportunity to dress Vivien Leigh in something other than green, Plunkett designed a white gown with red ribbons. Strangely enough, it's this dress that most people remember – and not the green ones!

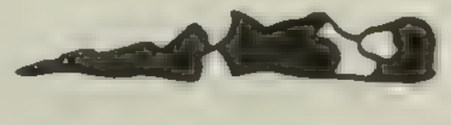
Yul Brynner wore only black clothes for the last 45 years of his life, thus anticipating the influence of sombre Japanese fashion in the 1980s. Not only did he look dramatic dressed entirely in black but, as he explained, 'I don't have any choices to make in the morning, and shopping becomes so much easier.'

Tallulah Bankhead often dispensed with underwear, and didn't care who knew about it. Each day during the making of one film she had to climb up a ladder to reach the set, and it became embarrassingly obvious to all the crew that she was wearing nothing underneath her dress. Despite complaints from the camera and lighting men about the shadow that showed beneath her skirt, the director refused to do anything about it. After all, he explained, he didn't know which department of the studio would be responsible for solving the problem – costume, make-up or hairdressing.

The necklines of Margaret Lockwood's costumes for *The Wicked Lady* were so low that, though acceptable in Britain, many of the scenes had to be reshot in more modest outfits for the American market.

When Clark Gable took off his shirt in *It Happened One Night*, and revealed that he wasn't wearing a vest, sales of undershirts plummeted almost overnight.

Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers may have danced divinely together but their relationship was sometimes strained by the dominating presence of Ginger's mother, Leila. Mrs Rogers was determined that her daughter should look her best on screen and took a particular interest in her dresses. Fred and Ginger would spend hours rehearsing in their costumes, ironing out any problems that might be caused by a sweeping hem or a flapping coat-tail and perfecting their split-second timing. Then Mrs Rogers, disappointed with the way a skirt or sleeve was hanging, would sew weights into Ginger's outfits to improve their line. When the time came to film the scene Fred discovered that the added weight threw his timing out and they'd have to rehearse again. On another occasion, after her mother had added weights to a hem, Ginger twirled on the dance floor and her skirt wrapped itself so tightly around her legs that she couldn't move.



Gloria Swanson had very expensive tastes. Her annual clothing bill was once broken down as follows:

Dresses and gowns	$50,000
Fur coats	$25,000
Other coats	$10,000
Stockings	$9,000
Lingerie	$10,000
Handbags	$5,000
Hats	$5,000

Going My Way, the story of a singing priest, won an Oscar for its star Bing Crosby. But for several years after its release it was banned in Latin American countries because the priest wore a sweatshirt and a baseball cap.

It's said that when Charlie Chaplin's mother visited him on set and saw him in his Little Tramp costume for the first time she said, 'Charlie, I must get you a new suit.'

The tramp costume – possibly the most famous of all screen costumes – was in fact assembled in a few minutes in the dressing room at Mack Sennett's studio after Chaplin had been told to go and 'get into a comedy make-up'. The baggy trousers were borrowed from Fatty Arbuckle and the coat from Chester Conklin; both actors were hanging around the dressing-room at the time. The size 14 shoes and the bowler hat were loaned by others. Only the cane belonged to Chaplin himself.

In the days of black and white films, most of the outfits were made in black, grey, white or red as these were the only colours that registered distinctly on screen. Red, by the way, came out looking blacker than black.

For his epic about the American Civil War, *Birth of a Nation*, D. W. Griffith decided that he could save money and create an authentic feel by dressing his actors in real uniforms. Quantities of old uniforms were found, but the idea had to be scrapped when it was discovered that barely a costume would fit. The American diet had improved so

much over the intervening fifty years that modern men were too big to fit into the uniforms their grandfathers had worn.

When this story was first told it seemed so unlikely that most people instantly dismissed it as a publicity stunt. However, all those involved swore that it really did happen.

For his part as Professor Marvel in *The Wizard of Oz*, actor Frank Morgan was required to wear a scruffy coat. Rather than make one from scratch, the wardrobe department at MGM bought a rackful of old coats from a second-hand shop and let Morgan try them on. He eventually found one which fitted, and he wore it for the part. One day at the studio he went through the pockets and found, to his amazement, the name L. Frank Baum stitched into one of them. L. Frank Baum was the man who had written the story of *The Wizard of Oz* and, as Morgan's research revealed, it really was his old coat!

Having seen Marlene Dietrich wearing trousers in the 1930 film *Morocco*, thousands of women copied her – blissfully unaware that the director had dressed his star in slacks to highlight the lesbian characteristics of the character she was playing.

'My body was made for leather pants. I find that business suits itch.'

Eddie Murphy

For her role in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Ingrid Bergman needed a very worn and scruffy costume. To save time and money the wardrobe department looked through the wardrobe from which extras were normally dressed and came up with a suitably shabby pair of trousers and a shirt that were clean but had seen better days. However, when the head of the studio saw what they were proposing to dress his star in, he was furious. Miss Bergman must have a *new* costume, he insisted. The wardrobe mistress duly made a pair of trousers and a shirt from new fabric, then dyed them, frayed them, tore them and bleached them to make them look exactly like the old clothes.

One of the big movie hits of 1988 was *The Last Emperor*, which told the story of P'u Yi, the last emperor of China. In real life, and in the film, P'u Yi wore round, horn-rimmed style spectacles. These were modelled on the glasses worn by silent comedy star Harold Lloyd, who was a great favourite of the emperor!

BEGIN WITH AN EARTHQUAKE

I reckon from an actor's point of view (and in a few pages you'll see I'm not alone) that the worst 'special effects' to be involved with on screen are sex scenes. They've got to be special and effective for the audience but shooting them can be sheer murder. I hate making scenes like this and if I could work it I know that I'd never choose to play another topless scene. The girl is usually embarrassed. You're embarrassed. And there's a crew of thirty working round you which doesn't exactly make it a private experience.

If that isn't off-putting enough, for actors sex scenes are very awkward technically. You might get your face in one position only to find that the camera can see right up your nostrils. Then you'll open your mouth too wide and it will be filming all the fillings in your back teeth – very erotic!

I had one particularly embarrassing experience while making *Hurry Sundown* with Jane Fonda. In one scene I had to rape her, and Otto Preminger, who was directing, never said 'Cut'. Even when the magazine on the camera had run out he still didn't say 'Cut', waiting to see just how far I would go. It got very embarrassing indeed until finally I had to say, 'I'm sorry . . . I can't go any further with this.'

Normally I don't drink on set but making *Deathtrap*, Christopher Reeve and I, playing a couple of homosexuals, each drank half a bottle of brandy before we could kiss each other. That must have been the tightest-lipped kiss in the history of the cinema. You couldn't have got a bus ticket between us.

Oh yes, I've kissed everybody in movies – even Superman! And for special effects that takes some beating.

'The way to make a film is to begin with a earthquake and work up to a climax.'

Cecil B. De Mille

MGM always prided itself on being a cut above the other studios. It was widely acknowledged that when it came to attention to detail and research, they were rather more thorough than some of the smaller companies. But even MGM had its aberrations. When the head of the art and design department discovered that for a film called *Paris* he was to supply a set which included a moonlit ocean in the background, he dashed straight round to see Irving Thalberg, then head of the studio. With the aid of an atlas he pointed out that Paris was nowhere near an ocean, and that not even a decent-sized lake could be seen from the Eiffel Tower.

Thalberg was unmoved. 'We don't cater to the handful of people who know Paris,' he said. 'Whatever you put in the background, they'll believe that's how it is.' Maybe MGM should have christened the film *Paris-sur-Mer*!

A scene in a 1947 film entitled *The Fabulous Texan* called for Indians to send a smoke signal so, to ensure authenticity, the director called in some real Red Indians to act as supervisors. When the film was finished and shown, the producer thanked the Indians for their attention to detail and asked them how they'd learned about sending smoke signals.

'It was easy,' one of them explained. 'We learned how to do it from the movies.'

For *The Wizard of Oz*, a cast of 116 dwarves and midgets was recruited to play the Munchkins. When larger numbers of Munchkins were required, children were used. However, they were always positioned as far away as possible from the camera.

Props departments are asked to supply the most unusual items. For *The Gold Rush* they made a boot out of licorice so that Charlie Chaplin could eat it. And when Harpo Marx wanted to chew a telephone they made him one out of chocolate. When it came to *Oklahoma!*, in which there's a song including the line, 'the corn is as high as an elephant's eye,' they surpassed themselves. An agricultural specialist brought in to ensure that the real thing lived up to the boast of the song produced corn sixteen feet high; but in fact an elephant's eye is only about eight feet from the ground. On *Gone With the Wind* the props people had to find no fewer than 1,250,000 items, while for *Singin' in the Rain* milk was added to the raindrops for the famous dance sequence so that they would show up well on camera. For Janet Leigh's stabbing in *Psycho* the blood was actually chocolate sauce. And the forty foot high wooden horse built for the 1954 film *Helen of Troy* had to be fitted with an air conditioning system so that the actors packed inside it didn't suffocate from the heat. Somehow it takes all the magic out of the movies!

For his epic flop *Heaven's Gate* Michael Cimino used 1.5 million feet of film, of which 1.3 million feet was actually exposed. Shown non-stop, the uncut film would have run for over nine days. In terms of footage, around 100 ordinary

feature films could have been made with the same amount of film.

In 1955 the actors and production team of a movie entitled *The Conqueror* arrived in Utah to start filming. The spot they chose for their location was not far from Yucca Flat, Nevada where two years previously eleven atomic bombs had been exploded for research purposes. Unknown to the film company the winds had blown radioactive sand to the spot where John Wayne and his co-stars Susan Hayward and Dick Powell were acting out the story of Genghis Khan. Thirty years on, ninety of the 220 crew who worked on the production had developed cancer – including all three of the stars.

Sir Richard Attenborough got into the record books when a crowd of 300,000 extras turned out to participate in the funeral scene of *Gandhi*. Almost 100,000 of the crowd had actually been contracted to take part for the payment of 40p for the day, and the others were volunteers.

A Rank film crew making *A Tale of Two Cities* in the French city of Bourges suffered an unexpected shortage of extras because all the local people were out in the fields harvesting their crops. It was eventually decided that American soldiers and their families, recruited from the local base, would be used instead. Once the hefty six-footers had been crammed into costumes originally intended for shrunken French peasants, they were herded

into position and instructed to shake their fists and yell 'Death to the aristocrats' on cue. The cameras rolled. The extras shook their fists. Then from the crowd came the yell, 'Hang the bums!' The director stopped everything and demanded an explanation.

The culprit came forward and apologised. 'I come from a hanging state,' he explained.

Although the use of colour was widespread by the 1940s, all the Best Film Oscars of that decade were won by films shot in black and white.

How many times have you watched a love scene and wondered whether the couple on screen were really enjoying themselves? According to Michael Douglas, star of the steamy *Fatal Attraction*, during love scenes actors have their minds on anything except passion!

'Believe me,' he said when the film was released, 'movie sex can be real tough. If you're on top of a woman in a love scene, it's very difficult for the camera to get angles. So you do acrobatics – not for fun, just so the lighting is right. Sorry, love scenes are hard work.'

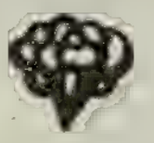
Joan Collins couldn't agree more. 'Making love on the screen really is the most sexless, and most boring thing in the whole world.'

Even Clark Gable, known as the King of Hollywood, found it difficult to get into the mood when he was making one of his early films. 'When I did my first love scene, the director told me to use a longing expression, so I thought of a big, tender, rare steak,' he once revealed. When he made *Gone With the Wind* with Vivien Leigh, however, it was she who had trouble with their romantic scenes. She refused to

kiss him until he did something about his bad breath and ill-fitting dentures.

Other stars have been luckier and enjoyed filming clinches. After making *Out of Africa*, Meryl Streep revealed, 'Robert Redford's the very best kisser I ever met.' And Paul Hogan, star of *Crocodile Dundee* said, 'I'll get out of any stunt I can. Except the love scenes.'

What do Audrey Hepburn, Rita Hayworth and Christopher Plummer have in common? They've all starred in musicals – *My Fair Lady*, *Cover Girl* and *The Sound of Music* respectively – and yet none of them could sing.



During filming of *The Prisoner of Zenda* the director and cameraman devised a spectacular scene in which a courtier eavesdropped on a conversation and then trotted through a sumptuous palace to pass on what he had overheard. The action was arranged so that it could be recorded in one flowing shot. When the rehearsal began, it all seemed to be going to plan. The courtier overheard the news, then made his way through a number of rooms, including a ballroom where dozens of well-rehearsed couples were dancing a waltz, along the minstrels' gallery, downstairs into the kitchen and then out to a huge flight of steps. Down he came, heading towards David Niven, Raymond Massey and Douglas Fairbanks Jnr, who were waiting for the messenger's information.

'Good news!' he announced, exactly as planned – except that the three men waiting at the bottom recoiled in disgust as the courtier's appalling bad breath hit them. They managed to hide their growing hysteria through the rehearsals, but when it came to the actual filming there was

nothing they could do to prevent themselves bursting into laughter as he came tearing down the steps towards them. After a number of unsuccessful takes, the director decided that he would cut away after the messenger and add the reaction of Niven, Fairbanks and Massey later – when they had managed to stop giggling.

Out of the full 222 minutes of *Gone With the Wind*, only thirty minutes do not have any music.

Filming in exotic locations sometimes calls for unexpected reserves of ingenuity, as Katharine Hepburn recalled in her book on the making of that classic movie, *The African Queen*. Most of the film was shot on location in an extremely hot and humid part of Africa. The first day's shooting started with a burial scene. Miss Hepburn, wearing her costume which included a hat with a big brim, had to kneel in the mud beside her 'brother's' grave. Filming started, but soon the director called a halt. It was no good; the steamy heat of the jungle was making the hatbrim droop over Miss Hepburn's face. The brim would have to be stiffened.

It so happened that the wardrobe lady, who would normally be equipped to handle such a crisis, hadn't yet arrived on location. They were going to have to improvise. After some thought Miss Hepburn realised what was required – rice water. Off she set, accompanied by one of the assistants, to a nearby village where they could see smoke rising from one of the huts. In they barged, Miss Hepburn in full Victorian costume. Sure enough, a pot of rice was boiling away over an open fire. A few minutes later they emerged with the pot and its contents, which they

boiled down until they were left with just a few spoonfuls of the sticky, starchy water. This they patted onto the brim of the hat, which they held in shape until it dried. It worked as well as a can of spray starch might have done, and a day's filming was saved.

In 1948 an experiment was tried with *They Passed This Way*, a western in which not a single shot was fired. It was, as many had predicted, a total flop.

The Crowd was the last great silent film to be made by MGM, but it wasn't for that reason that it caused such a stir. The focus of the excitement was the bathroom set that was shown in the movie. Not the bathroom, exactly, but the furnishings shown in it for, according to film experts, this was the first American-made film to show a toilet. Until then, toilets were taboo.

Forty years later another loo-taboo was smashed when in 1972 an Australian film called *The Office Picnic* actually showed someone using a toilet with the door open.

In the days when Hollywood film studios were churning out a picture a week, no one had time to pay much attention to minor details on set. Very often, watching an old film, one sees someone go to a drawer or cupboard, open it and reveal that it's empty except for the one thing they want to take from it. And many of the suitcases and bags that characters have to carry around seem very light – because they were empty. These days there's much more emphasis

on getting such things right, and time is spent filling the cupboards and drawers of a set with appropriate articles, furnishing rooms down to the last teaspoon, and even putting bricks into suitcases.

Such attention to detail was employed for the film *The Conversation*, starring Gene Hackman as an electronics expert. Rather than build a set, the designers rented a suitable house and, as there were some months to go before filming commenced, set about establishing the fictional character. Using his name they sent off for computer magazines, electronics catalogues and anything else they felt he might have written away for. All these items were used as props in the film and gave that extra edge of authenticity.

For *Klute*, in which she played a call-girl, Jane Fonda was encouraged by the director to sleep in the flat that had been created for her character's home. This she did, and as she got into the role and began to understand the part she was playing, she changed the furniture to suit the personality and lifestyle of her character better.

Some people go to even more extraordinary lengths. The designer working on *The Godfather* wanted to recreate the authentic look and feel of an Italian family's kitchen. As well as building and equipping it, he went in and cooked there, crushing garlic, slicing salami and spilling tomato paste on the floor and the stove and mopping it up in the haphazard way that a busy housewife might. After some time the result was exactly right; the kitchen looked as if it was really lived in – it even smelled Italian.

Of course, there were one or two earlier directors whose attention to detail was justly famed. For one of his costly epics Erich von Stroheim kitted out the extras playing guards at the Imperial palace with pure silk underpants, each pair hand-embroidered with a monogram. And all this despite the fact that not a single pair of these underpants was actually seen in the film!

Each morning during filming of an Alan Ladd movie, an assistant was sent to check the extras – to make sure that none of them loomed over the little star.

There's a scene in *The Great Escape* in which Steve McQueen, playing a German prisoner of war, escapes from the prison camp on a motorbike. There follows a dramatic chase in which he is pursued across country by German soldiers. McQueen was a very experienced rider and had no problems in zooming around – in fact he was so good that when they filmed the scene the first time, the local motor-cyclists who had been employed to chase him couldn't keep up.

The director sent out a call for professional stunt riders, but they turned out either to be working on other jobs or off competing at a motorcycle Grand Prix. Eventually McQueen came up with the answer. He donned a German uniform, pulled a scarf across his face and doubled for his own pursuers. After clever cutting, no one knew that in some sequences of the movie they were watching McQueen hurtle past – hotly pursued by himself!

1,250,000 props were used during the making of *Gone With the Wind*, and in case Clark Gable's famous line, 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn,' caused too much offence to the audience, the scene was also filmed with the line, 'Frankly, my dear, I don't care.'

The late great Fred Astaire was almost as good at golf as he

was at dancing. There's a story told about an incident that occurred during the filming of one of his less well-known musicals, *Carefree*. During one of the dance sequences Fred ended up on a golf course. Lined up in front of him on tees were a dozen or more golfballs. Still dancing, and in perfect time to the music, he had to take a golf club and hit each of them into the distance. It was a difficult sequence but he managed it without bother. And when someone was sent to retrieve the balls they discovered that every one of them had landed on the green and all were within eight feet of each other.

Fred himself was modest about his amazing dancing talents. 'I just put my feet in the air and move them around,' he once said. Another time, though, he admitted, 'I suppose I make it look easy, but gee whizz, did I work and worry!' And later in his life, when he was in his eighties, he commented wryly: 'When they review my shows, they don't say whether they're good or bad – they just say how old I am.'

Horror films are treated as something of a giggle these days, but when they first came out they terrified people. After the release of *Frankenstein* in 1931 several people tried to sue the film company for scaring them out of their wits.

The Islamic code forbids any kind of representation or 'graven image' of God, the prophet Mohammad and most of Mohammad's family. As a result, the 1977 film *Mohammad: Messenger of God*, the story of the prophet's life, does not actually show him. Furthermore, representing Mohammad's voice and even his shadow was forbidden. For those scenes when the prophet was called upon to

'appear' the other actors found themselves literally talking to thin air.

While filming *Hell's Angels*, a thirties tale of daring aviators, no fewer than four stuntmen were killed in air crashes.

In 1943, as part of the war effort, a number of stars appeared in a film entitled *This Is the Army*. The music was written by Irving Berlin and he himself appeared in it singing a song called 'How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning'. It's a charming song, and one just suited to his croaky, quiet tones – but no one would dream of calling him a great singer. While this scene was being filmed one of the electricians in the background turned to the person standing next to him and said critically, 'If the guy who wrote this song could hear this guy singing it, he'd turn over in his grave.'

Making a film is an extremely complicated business. Scenes are shot out of order and sometimes weeks apart – at which point the role of the continuity assistant becomes vital, ensuring that all the details match each other precisely. Anyone making a historical film has to ensure that all the details of the costume and sets are correct, and that no modern noises like aircraft or road traffic intrude. And for outdoor filming, the weather has to match from one shot to the next. Despite all the attempts to ensure that there is no

discontinuity, the occasional boob does happen – and here are just a few classics to look out for.

In *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, there's a scene in which Errol Flynn picks up a leg of lamb and takes a bite from it. The next moment he's shown just holding the bone, as if he's polished off the lot in one mouthful.

You're unlikely to get a chance to watch *Inchon*, a film funded by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Moonies, but it contains a classic mistake. Laurence Olivier, playing General Douglas MacArthur, has one scene in which his trousers change colour three times during the course of a single speech. He starts off in beige, then changes to green, and is back in beige to end the speech.

A classic boob occurs in the screen version of *Man About the House*. At one point a man is shown climbing into a taxi outside a building that, to anyone who knows it, is obviously the Thames Television Studios. Once in the cab he tells the driver to take him to the Thames TV Studios. The cab disappears round the block and returns to the same spot where, apparently unaware of what has just happened, the man gets out.

On a more popular note, in *The Man With the Golden Gun*, in which Roger Moore plays James Bond, there is a fight in a nightclub dressing room. During the scuffle one of the heavies bashes into the dressing-table mirror and knocks it over. For a brief second there is a glimpse of the reflection of the camera crew but, the next moment, the mirror is amazingly back in its original place.

In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, an expensive and carefully made movie, there's a scene in which Richard Dreyfuss is shown in his studio. Outside it's pouring with rain. The next moment he wanders over to the window to look out – and suddenly the sun is out and there are children playing on the lawn.

There is a scene in *The Sound of Music* in which Julie Andrews and her charges are in a market. Visible under a stall is a wooden crate containing Jaffa oranges, and underneath is written, 'Produce of Israel'. The film is set in the 1930s, during Hitler's rise to power – and the state of Israel was not founded until after the war.

Silent movie star Harold Lloyd lost part of his hand when a stunt bomb exploded while he was posing for a publicity shot.

In the 1920s the Hays Office, which censored all Hollywood movies, decreed that a kiss could last for just three seconds or ten feet of celluloid. Hollywood was swept by another wave of censorship in the 1930s and new films with compromising titles underwent a swift change of name. *It Ain't No Sin*, starring Mae West, became *I'm No Angel*. And *Born to Be Kissed* was transformed into *100% Pure*.

Still on the subject of censorship, *Whisky Galore!*, the delightful Ealing Comedy which tells the tale of a group of Scottish islanders who recover a cargo of whisky from a wrecked ship, had to be renamed for its American debut because alcohol was not allowed to be mentioned in film titles. In the US it became *Tight Little Island*. In France it was christened *Whisky a Go-Go* and was such a hit that a nightclub was named after it and the phrase fell into common use.

According to the archives, the first custard pie was thrown by comedienne Mabel Normand at comic Ben Turpin, who was being difficult on set. The pie had been brought to work by one of the workmen; he'd planned to eat it for his lunch. When the incident was shown the next day it was so funny that pie throwing became a regular feature of slapstick comedies. And the shop near the studio made a small fortune by developing and selling a particularly gooey brand of pie!

For fight scenes and punch-ups on screen, special furniture called breakaway furniture is used. It is constructed from balsa wood and can be flung about and broken easily to give the impression of spectacular damage.

Most people leave the cinema as soon as the film is over, but hanging around to watch the credits can be amusing.

The credits for a 1928 film of *The Taming of the Shrew* included the immortal, 'By William Shakespeare with additional dialogue by Sam Taylor.'

Clint Eastwood's film *Gauntlet* included a credit for 'First Aid'.

On *The Greek Tycoon* mention was made of 'The Assistant to the Assistant to the Unit Publicist'.

Credit-watching can also be tedious. Those for *Once Upon a Time in the West* lasted for twelve full minutes. And for *Superman the Movie* no fewer than 457 names are credited.

In *Miranda*, a 1950s film about a mermaid, the final credit at the end of the movie read, 'Tail by Dunlop.'

Scottish director Bill Forsyth, who went on to great success with *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero*, started his career with a small-scale production called *That Sinking Feeling*. It cost just £6,000 to make and became the cheapest British film to be shown internationally. In America no one could understand the Glaswegian accents of the actors and so it had to be dubbed; the dubbing cost more than the original movie.

When projected onto a cinema screen, a single frame of 35mm film is magnified anywhere between 50,000 and 300,000 times.

To make the desert look right for certain scenes in

Lawrence of Arabia, the designers had it sprayed with paint.

One of the most successful films of the 1980s is *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, which in Britain went out with a PG rating. But according to some authorities, most notably the American National Coalition on Television Violence, it contained so many acts of violence that it should have had an X certificate. At the last count they had logged 14 killings by the hero and 39 attempted murders, plus more than a hundred other incidents of killings, maiming, torture and other acts of violence.

In the film *Kind Hearts and Coronets* Alec Guinness played eight members of the D'Ascoyne family. In one shot he can be seen portraying seven of them simultaneously.

During the 1960s Samuel Bronstein made several epic films, including *El Cid*, on location in Spain. The Spanish army were extremely helpful and supplied hundreds of men to act as extras. It's said that when, on one occasion, General Franco decided to review his troops and asked the army chief to arrange it, he was told, 'Sorry, but the army is making a movie for Samuel Bronstein.'

If you've seen Steven Spielberg's film *Close Encounters of*

the Third Kind you'll have marvelled at the scenes which show the space ship. You may not have been so impressed if you had seen some of the footage that was originally shot for this part of the film. The idea was to have dozens of space creatures gliding mysteriously out of the craft, and to that effect children were recruited and equipped with catsuits and special skateboards. All they had to do was skateboard, on cue, down the ramp that descended from the spaceship to the ground.

Unfortunately it didn't go to plan. First, the effect didn't work as hoped, and the aliens looked like nothing so much as children wearing catsuits and riding on skateboards. Even more disastrous, there was a pile-up on the ramp and many of the strange space creatures went flying in a tangle of very un-alien arms and legs.

In fact, the spaceship itself was not as Spielberg had originally intended. His first design had ended up looking, as he himself described it, like a wedge of pie. It was scrapped, but no one could think of a better design. Inspiration came one night when Spielberg drove past an oil refinery in Bombay. It was lit by hundreds of tiny lights flaring from pipes and casting an atmospheric glow – and so the *Close Encounters* spacecraft was created.

For her role in a Biblical epic, Claudette Colbert was required to appear in one scene in a bath filled with gallons of milk. On the first day of filming it was fine, but under the hot lights of the studio the milk began to turn sour. By the time they finished all the shots several days later, Miss Colbert was bathing in a tub full of smelly cheese.

We all know and love *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*,

Disney's first full-length cartoon, but would you feel the same way about the dwarfs if they were called Scrappy, Dirty, Daffy, Chesty, Puffy, Snoopy and Awful? These were all names given serious consideration by the Disney studio before they settled on the more familiar ones – Sleepy, Happy, Dopey, Sneezy, Grumpy, Bashful and Doc.

The one moment that most people remember from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* is that when Butch and Sundance jump from the cliff. In fact Paul Newman and Robert Redford leapt only a few feet onto a specially constructed platform. Several weeks later, and miles away in Florida, two stuntmen finished the jump.

Columbia Studios once chartered a cruise liner, loaded it with a film crew and actors and sent it to sea to make a film called *The Captain Hates the Sea*. Unfortunately they didn't empty the bar before the ship left harbour and the actors and some of the crew made good use of it. After long delays during which the costs escalated, the studio sent the message that they should return immediately. 'The cost is staggering,' Harry Cohn cabled.

'So is the cast,' came the reply.

Airplane and *Friday the Thirteenth* were both highly successful films, yet the cost of making both of them came to less than the fortune spent on the closing credits for *Star Wars*.

According to some people, the 'special effects' in the 1979 film *Caligula* were not special effects at all – they were the real thing. There's one orgy scene which, it has been said, was not faked; apparently the people involved got carried away and the fun lasted an entire day. It probably wasn't the first time such a thing had happened in a film studio. There were strong rumours about the orgy scenes that Eric von Stroheim was fond of including in his movies. For these he insisted on banning everyone from the set except his carefully selected cast and crew, who would spend up to twenty hours 'working' with only short breaks for caviar and champagne. Only a handful of people ever saw the footage shot on these occasions; the finished films contained just the briefest and most inoffensive suggestions of what had really gone on.

Another story told about the making of *Caligula* concerns a young Penthouse Pet who participated in a scene in which she had to perform fellatio on an actor. The director was not impressed by their efforts. It's rumoured that he showed them how to do it differently – standing in for the actor himself.

In 52 days of filming the epic flop *Cleopatra* at Pinewood studios, less than 11 minutes of usable material was obtained. This was because, despite warnings, the set had been built in the open air – and ancient Egypt was not famous for its torrential downpours and grey skies. Eventually the entire project was moved to Italy.

During the heyday of Hollywood, some studios had higher standards than others. Warners were famous for the low-budget films they turned out, while MGM was known for

the meticulous care given to costumes and scenery. Ray Bolger, who played the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*, confirmed the measures they took to make everything look right. Each morning, after he'd put on his costume, someone from the wardrobe department would carefully count each ear of corn and piece of straw to ensure that he looked exactly the same from shot to shot.

The Trail of the Pink Panther holds the dubious distinction of being the only film on which production began after the death of its star, Peter Sellers. Sellers' death was an extraordinary blow to the makers of the highly successful Pink Panther series, but they had on their hands hundreds of feet of out-takes and cuts from the previous films. This they stitched together into a 'new' movie, using an unknown actor in heavy disguise to link the scenes. The result was considered so awful that when Sellers' widow brought a million-dollar lawsuit against the makers, she won it outright.

From 1926 onwards, Walt Disney did none of the drawings for his studio's films. In fact he willingly admitted that he was not a particularly skilled artist.

As a publicity stunt to draw attention to the opening of *Pinocchio*, the Disney studio hired eleven midgets, dressed them like Pinocchio and put them up on the low roof at the front of the cinema where the film was showing. There they cavorted around, amusing passers-by and attracting a

crowd. At lunchtime a picnic basket was passed up to the little chaps. It contained, among other things, a decent supply of alcohol – which no doubt explains why, a few hours later, a huge crowd gathered to watch eleven naked midgets belching, playing cards and generally behaving in an un-Pinocchio-like manner. When the police were called to deal with the miscreants they climbed up on the roof, captured them and carried them away in pillowcases.

NEVER WORK WITH ANIMALS OR CHILDREN . . .

Working with animals is one thing, working with thousands and thousands of insects is a different story. I found this out while making *The Swarm* when the number of extras was swelled by what seemed like millions of bees, which made life very interesting! We found our clothes getting covered in tiny black spots and no one knew what was causing them until a bee expert on the set explained, 'That's bee shit, mister'.

When it comes to working with children, one of the most amazing coincidences I've ever come across in the movie business involved a little baby in an old silent movie. I'm a sort of comedian 'groupie' and while I was out in California a whole lot of comedians gave a party for me in the ballroom of a big hotel. They decorated the walls with large blow-up pictures of old comedy stars. Now, in America there are a couple of very famous comedians whose work I've always enjoyed. One's Steve Allen, the other is Milton Berle. Looking round the pictures that evening I saw a still from a movie showing Charlie Chaplin standing beside a woman who was holding the baby. It turned out that that woman was Steve Allen's mother and the baby in her arms was Milton Berle!

Rex Harrison, famed for his classic and serious roles, once made the mistake of starring with animals and children in the film musical *Dr Dolittle*. One scene involved him standing in a field of sheep and singing. He explained the problems. 'First, they had to spray me down for flies. Then the sheep were constantly peeing all over me. The ground was so wet. Oh – agony!'

When members of the American equivalent of the RSPCA saw *The Ten Commandments* they were shocked by the scene in which Moses parted the Red Sea to lead the Israelites through, then closed the waters over Pharaoh's troops and horses. From around the country came hundreds of letters of protest at such cruelty; how dare the film industry drown innocent animals, they stormed. Eventually the row reached such a pitch that the film's director was forced to reveal how they had created the effect. They'd shot one film of the Israelites being chased across open ground by the Egyptians. Then they'd gone into the special effects department where technicians had carefully carved two giant blocks of red jelly with waves. These blocks were placed together and water was trickled over them to look like the Red Sea. On cue the two blocks were winched open – and lo! the sea parted. When the film was reversed they appeared to shut. Shown together with the footage of the Israelites and Pharaoh's army in a double exposure, this trick gave a surprisingly realistic impression of the Biblical miracle.

Once this had been explained to them the anti-cruelty protesters were satisfied. But Cecil B. De Mille, the film's director, was disgusted: 'Aren't you worried about the human beings at all?' he asked. Throughout the whole affair not a single person had expressed concern about the actors who appeared to have drowned with the horses.

Among the animal stars of the early Hollywood era were:

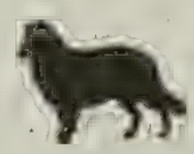
Pepper – a cat who was actually born under a film stage and starred in a Mack Sennett comedy when she was only a few weeks old.

Frederick Wilhelm – a white mouse who starred with Pepper.

Teddy – a Great Dane, who signed his own contract with a paw-mark. He was the first animal star to have a double for dangerous scenes.

Anna May – the elephant star of several Tarzan films. A small-eared Indian elephant, she was supplied with a set of false ears and tusks for occasions when she was required to play an African elephant. Her favourite titbits were cigarette ends.

What do Slats, Jackie and Tanner have in common? For a start they are all lions. More specifically, they are the roaring lions who appear in the MGM trademark that precedes all MGM pictures.



Ronald Reagan was the master of ceremonies at the first Patsy Awards ceremony at which animal stars received awards for their performances. Patsy stood for Picture Animal Top Star of the Year. The first winner was Francis the mule in 1949. In 1953 a chimp called Bonzo won the award; he'd starred with Ronald Reagan in *Bedtime for Bonzo*.

Alfred Hitchcock's film *The Birds* caused a storm among

audiences, who were terrified at the sight of birds on the attack. Had they known how he had achieved some of the effects there might have been an even greater outcry.

In one scene schoolchildren had to be shown fleeing from the furious birds. Seagulls were attached to the shoulders of their school uniforms using lengths of nylon thread, and as the children ran the birds had to follow, flapping and diving as they attempted to break free.

Things were even worse for the female star of the film, Tippi Hedren. For one scene she spent hours crawling around on the floor being pelted by birds which were thrown at her to get a dive-bombing effect. On another occasion she was actually tied down and birds were attached to her clothing. They fought and pecked in their struggle to break loose and one furious seagull pecked her eyelid so hard that she was almost blinded. Filming had to be stopped when, quite understandably, Miss Hedren broke down and couldn't continue.

Lassie is probably the only animal to have starred in a radio show. It was called *The Lassie Radio Show*. Lassie did her bit by barking, whining and growling at appropriate points in the story.

Claudette Colbert was signed up to play the title role in the 1934 movie *Cleopatra*, but there was one small problem – she couldn't stand snakes. The director assured her that they would find some way of overcoming this difficulty when the time came for her death scene, in which she had to be bitten by an asp. It came – and Miss Colbert went pale when the director arrived on set draped in the coils of a boa constrictor. 'I can't even touch that!' she squealed. From

his pocket he produced a small snake, not much bigger than a large worm.

'How about this one?' he asked.

Miss Colbert gamely took it from him. 'I don't mind a little thing like that,' she said.

'Well *that*,' announced the director, 'is an asp!'

Lassie, though supposed to be a bitch, was actually played by a dog called Pal. At the height of his fame, Pal had to be guarded round the clock to prevent his fans clipping chunks of hair out of his luxuriant coat.

During the making of *Jaws*, two shark experts were dispatched to get some live footage of real sharks. They were instructed to find an impressive 25-foot monster that would terrify the audience, but after some time spent searching for such a whopper they had to give up. All they could find were 15-foot specimens – and, to be honest, they didn't look very terrifying at all. Then they had an inspired idea. They searched around for the smallest diver they could find and eventually found a man only 4ft 5ins tall. He was equipped with scaled-down diving gear and lowered into the water in a suitably small protective cage. The effect of this was to make the 15-foot sharks seem much bigger than they really were, and the audiences thrilled to the sight of 'monster' sharks.

Donald Duck speaks French, Spanish, Japanese, German and even Chinese. Clarence Nash, the man who created

Donald's distinctive voice, could quack, in any of these languages, though he didn't actually understand them and they had to be written out phonetically for him.

The first British film to go on release in post-revolution China was *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, starring members of the Royal Ballet dressed as rabbits, pigs and assorted wildlife.

Mel Blanc, who for years supplied the voice of Bugs Bunny, was allergic to carrots.

'Ever since they found out that Lassie was a boy, the public has believed the worst about Hollywood.'

Groucho Marx

So that they would look particularly ferocious, the lions used in the 1925 version of *Quo Vadis?* were not fed for several days before they were filmed in the scenes where they devoured Christians. Unfortunately one of the starving beasts escaped from his cage, pounced into the middle of a crowd of extras and killed one of them. It wasn't until the lion actually began to eat his prey that the keepers, with great reluctance, shot it. After all, extras were ten-a-penny but lions were much more difficult to come by!

Mickey Mouse has an entry to himself in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

For the filming of *Dr Dolittle*, a 1967 movie based on the famous children's books written by Hugh Lofting, a large cast of animals had to be assembled and trained. One of the most important was Polynesia, Dr Dolittle's parrot. The parrot was taught to speak a few lines of dialogue, but whenever the cameras rolled she remained stubbornly silent and in the end it was decided to have her voice dubbed by an actor. One day the crew were struggling to record one of the film's big musical numbers. It wasn't going well and the director kept yelling, 'Cut!' Then, just as everyone was beginning to feel they couldn't go through it again, the scene fell into place. Right in the middle of it, as everything was going perfectly, a voice called, 'Cut!' The cameras stopped. The director looked round furiously. The parrot, who had ruined the best take of the day, didn't turn a feather!

'Some of my best leading men have been horses and dogs.'

Elizabeth Taylor

The most popular film performer of 1926 was a dog – Rin Tin Tin. When, in 1927, the Academy Award vote was held for the winner of the Best Actor award, he also won that. The judges decided to eliminate him and concentrate on human performers.

Rin Tin Tin was discovered in an abandoned German trench at the end of World War I by an American Corporal who adopted the starving puppy and took him back to the US. Only a few years later he was one of the biggest draws at the box-office, insured for $100,000 and on his way to his first million. At the height of his fame he lived a life of luxury, with his own valet and chef and a private limousine complete with uniformed chauffeur. He died in 1932 in the arms of the most popular sex symbol of the time, Jean Harlow.

Around the World in Eighty Days featured one of the largest casts of animals ever assembled. Among the creatures who appeared were 3,800 sheep, 2,448 buffalo, 950 donkeys, 800 horses, 512 monkeys and 15 elephants.

In the early days of Hollywood, when the place was little more than a beautiful stretch of semi-desert, film-makers had to use their initiative when it came to props and equipment. One movie pioneer decided to make a film about a horse dealer who owned a white horse that no one would buy. It was a simple enough story. The dealer would paint the horse brown, sell it, and when the buyer gave the creature a bath all the paint would come off.

They searched around and eventually found a white horse, which was owned by an undertaker. He lent it to the film-maker on the understanding that it was worth $25 and he would want that sum if any harm befell the animal. At first there were no problems. Then came the point in the film when the horse had to be dyed brown. The props man supplied brown paint – brown oil paint. When it came to the

scene in which the horse was washed and the paint came off, nothing happened; the oil paint stuck.

With great embarrassment the horse was returned. The undertaker was furious, pointing out that for funerals only black or white horses could be used – not brown. A few days later a member of the film crew was sent back to negotiate compensation with him, and was amazed to find him all smiles. 'I tried to sell that horse for $25 when she was white,' he explained, 'and no one wanted to buy her. I put her back on sale now she's brown, and someone just paid $50 for her. I'm most grateful to the film company . . .'

A 1946 film entitled *The Courage of Lassie* didn't feature Lassie at all. She didn't appear once. The canine star of the movie was called Bill!

Cinema audiences have been so spoiled with wonderful special effects and stunts that they often don't realise how difficult and dangerous they are for the actors and stuntmen taking part. Take, for example, a story about Gregory Peck, star of the film *Moby Dick*. For the scene in which his character rode Moby Dick he had to climb aboard an eighty-foot long rubber whale that was towed out to sea off the Welsh coast. They were several miles out when a squall blew up and the whale began pitching and tossing alarmingly. Then the rope attaching it to the boat snapped, and Mr Peck found himself clinging for dear life as the whale was blown around out of control. As if this wasn't bad enough, the rough weather brought a bank of fog – and the film crew watched in alarm as whale and star were swallowed up in it and disappeared. Eventually the whale was located and Mr Peck was able to slide off it and into a boat –

but not before he and everyone else involved in the stunt had been in real fear for his life.

Joe Martin was an orang-utan who starred in many films, including some of the Tarzan movies. He was the first Universal Pictures star to have a mobile dressing room. When this appeared on set the human stars threatened to break their contracts unless they got them too.

The first animated film was *Gertie the Dinosaur* in 1909.

So much for the animals. Now the children . . .

During the filming of the 1922 version of Charles Dickens' classic *Oliver Twist*, child star Jackie Coogan had difficulty in crying on cue in a scene when he was told his fictional mother had died. The director offered some helpful hints. Why didn't he try imagining that his real mother was dead? Master Coogan concentrated on this unhappy thought. They played the scene again. Still no tears. Then the young star had a better idea. 'Would it be all right if I imagined my dog is dead?' he asked.

In fact Jackie Coogan had every right to feel distrustful of his mother. Of the $2 million dollars he earned before his twenty-first birthday, he received only $5,000. Mrs Coogan, entrusted with looking after the fortune until he came of age, pocketed the money herself. There was such an outcry at this injustice that a law was passed making it

impossible for other parents to do the same. But for Jackie Coogan it was too late.

Another big earner at an early age was Tatum O'Neal – the youngest actress ever to receive a Best Supporting Actress Oscar, at the age of nine. She was filming the remake of *National Velvet* when a school inspector came to the studio to make sure that her education was not being neglected. Having checked her work and discovered that her maths was not up to scratch, he asked if it didn't bother her. Miss O'Neal, then aged fourteen, and obviously wiser than poor Jackie Coogan, shook her head:

'Oh no, I'll have an accountant.'

It's difficult in this day and age to appreciate the phenomenal popularity of curly-haired moppet Shirley Temple, but author John Steinbeck gives one example of her unparalleled importance to Twentieth Century–Fox, which she saved from bankruptcy. He was in the middle of a meeting with producer Darryl Zanuck. The subject for discussion was the movie adaptation of Steinbeck's famous book, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Suddenly Zanuck's secretary tapped on the door and announced that Shirley Temple had lost a tooth in an accident on the film set.

'A front tooth?' asked Zanuck. The secretary nodded. Zanuck leapt from his chair and ran from the room. John Steinbeck muttered quietly:

'Don't bother about me. *The Grapes of Wrath* is quite unimportant compared to Shirley Temple's tooth.'

Shirley's dad was quite shocked by the outcome of her fame. A quiet man who worked in a bank, he was stunned to receive letters from women all over America, begging him to father a child with them!

'I stopped believing in Santa Claus at an early age. Mother took me to see him in a Hollywood department store and he asked me for my autograph.'

Shirley Temple

Margaret O'Brien made her first film at the age of four. Two years later she was a complete professional and once stunned the adult actors on set with this question to the director: 'When I cry, do you want the tears to run all the way or shall I stop halfway down?'

To make little Shirley Temple cry on screen the director would tell her she couldn't have any lunch, or that her mother had gone and was never coming back. This atmosphere of emotional blackmail left its impression on the tiny Miss Temple. Adult actress Alice Faye was working on a dance routine with her when the child star fell down some steps and hurt herself. She immediately accused Miss Faye of deliberately tripping her, and despite the actress's vociferous denials, she was given a stern warning that she must not damage the studio's prime performer.

Millions were charmed by the friendship of child actor Roddy McDowell and his equine pal Flicka in *My Friend Flicka*, but later MacDowell had a terrible confession to make. 'I wasn't too fond of Flicka,' he admitted later. 'Flicka would stand on my foot.'

Despite the fact that so few of her films have been classics, Elizabeth Taylor is one of the few modern actresses who keeps alive the kind of style and magic of the old movie stars. Like so many of the movie greats, she became a star more by luck than planning. Her father, who was an art-dealer in London, volunteered as a fire-watcher during the war. One of his fellow fire-watchers was an MGM executive, who one night mentioned that his studio was looking for a girl with an English accent to appear in *Lassie Come Home*. Having landed a role in that film, Miss Taylor was later cast in her first big success, *National Velvet*. Her rival for the part was another young English evacuee called Shirley Williams. She may not have made the grade as a film star, but she later went on to become a Labour MP and a founding member of the Social Democratic Party.

The National Playing Fields Association

Sixty years ago the National Playing Fields Association was established with a simple mandate: every child has the right to play. Nothing could be simpler. Yet our society is losing sight of this fundamental idea.

The NPFA has not, and it is now one of the most effective voices for better play provision. It is not a fashionable cause. Nor is it an emotional cause. It is a cause concerned with the bed-rock on which our society is founded.

We live in a world designed and built for adults by adults. Children must live in this world too. It is the world in which they have to grow. A vital part of that growing-up process is play. For children, play is not trivial or unimportant. It is an integral part of their healthy development. It is in their play that children learn about life and about living – their preparation for the future. Without it, the deprived child develops into the deprived adult. Children need to play and have the right to grow and develop in freedom and safety.

A concern for how children play and grow and develop is a concern for the future and the shape our society will take. The NPFA believes that we are failing our children, ourselves and our future in this key area. But it is still not too late, though the call for action grows more urgent.

We call our world 'the developed world'. How do children see it? They see high-rise flats, estates with post-age-stamp sized gardens, signs saying 'Keep off the Grass' and 'No Ball Games Here.' We pay more attention about creating space for car parking than for children to play. And it is not only to children that the environment has

become alien, almost hostile, but to adults as well. We have separated children from adults in their work, their education and their leisure.

We are destroying their play world. We are placing our children at risk and in doing so we place our own future at risk. The simple needs are those most quickly forgotten.

The Real Needs

In providing real play opportunities we can no longer salve our consciences by giving expensive toys and play equipment. Just to provide swings and roundabouts is only scratching at the surface of children's real needs. It is not just a question of play space and equipment. Children need:

to be creative

to be stimulated and challenged

to be involved in all aspects of life

otherwise they will seek their excitement in other ways.

Most of all the NPFA believes children need people. Children need the care and involvement of adults in their play. This means nothing less than a total change of attitudes. Bringing children – and their play – into the centre of our lives and thinking.

When we plan for children we plan for our future. The NPFA believes this means fighting for children:

fighting to give them space

fighting to give them time to play

fighting to give them opportunities to play

fighting to involve people in their play.

Above all else, the NPFA is fighting for the child's right to play. It means making the right choices in allocating our national resources. Play is cost effective.

it saves – repairing children's bodies and minds

it saves – by reducing delinquency, violence and vandalism

it saves – by preventing stress in families

That is what the NPFA's appeal for children's play is about. It is the only organisation with the potential to fight effectively for children's play. We urgently need your help and support:

to create a greater understanding of the value of play to children

to persuade both public and private sectors of their responsibilities to children

to improve the quantity and the quality of play opportunities for children

to support means of involving adults in the play – and therefore the lives – of children

In fact:

TO FIGHT FOR THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO PLAY

If you would like to help, this is the address to write to:

The National Playing Fields Association
25 Ovington Square
London SW3 1LQ

Telephone: 01-584 6445

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